

**Early Childhood
Education: An
International
Encyclopedia, Volumes 1-4**

*Edited by
Rebecca S. New
Moncrieff Cochran*

PRAEGER

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

An International Encyclopedia

Volume 1

A–D

Edited by

Rebecca S. New and Moncrieff Cochran

PRAEGER

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Young Children
 Zero to Three

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Act for Better Child Care (ABC)	National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)	Socioeconomic Status (SES)
Advocacy and Leadership	National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)	State Prekindergarten Programs
Child-care Subsidies and Tax Provisions	National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)	Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH)
Children's Defense Fund (CDF)	National Head Start Association (NHSA)	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM)	No Child Left Behind Act ((NCLBA)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	The World Forum on Early Care and Education
Early Head Start	Philanthropy and Young Children	World Health Organization (WHO)
Even Start	Poverty, Family and Child Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education	World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)
Good Start, Grow Smart		Worthy Wage Campaign
Head Start		
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)		

Child Care

Accreditation of Early Childhood Programs	Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW)	Child Care Subsidies, Tax Provisions
Act for Better Child Care (ABC)	Child Care	Day Nurseries
Attachment	Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	Early Care and Education Programs,
Black Caucus (NAEYC)		Administration of

Families	(NAEYC)	National Committee on
Infant Care	Academy for Early	Nursery Schools
National Association	Childhood Program	Program for Infant Toddler
for the Education of	Accreditation	Caregivers (PITC)
Young Children	National Association	School-Age Care
(NAEYC)	of Child-care	Worthy Wage
National Association	Resource and	Campaign
for the Education of	Referral Agencies	Yale University Child Study
Young Children	(NACRRA)	Center

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Behaviorism	Freud, Anna	Play and Gender
Biculturalism	Freud, Sigmund	Poverty, Family and Child
Bilingual Education	Gender and Gender	Psychosocial Theory
Binet, Alfred	Stereotyping	Race and Ethnicity in Early
Bowlby, John	Gesell, Arnold	Childhood Education
Bronfenbrenner, Urie	Hall, G(ranville)	Rousseau, Jean-Jacques
Bruner, Jerome	Stanley	Second-Language Acquisition
Bullying	Intelligence	in Early Childhood
Child Abuse and	Intelligence Quotient (IQ)	Self-Esteem and Self-Concept
Neglect	Kohlberg, Lawrence	Sex and Sexuality in Young
Child Study Movement	Language Diversity	Children
Constructionism	Luria, A. R.	Sexual Abuse
Constructivism	Maslow, Abraham	Social Cognitive Theory
Culture	Mathematics	Social Competence
Development, Brain	Maturationism	Social Constructionism
Development, Cognitive	Multiple Intelligences,	Social Constructivism
Development, Emotional	Theory of	Socio-cultural Theory
Development, Language	Narrative	Socioeconomic Status (SES)
Development, Moral	National Black Child	Spiritual Development
Development, Social	Development Institute	Temperament
Developmental Delay	(NBCDI)	Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich
Developmental Systems	Parents and Parent	War Play
Theories	Involvement	Watson, John B.
Disabilities, Young Children	Pavlov, Ivan Petrovich	Whiting, Beatrice
with	Peer Culture	Whiting, John W. M.
Ecology of Human	Peers and Friends	Yale University Child Study
Development	Piaget, Jean	Center

Early Childhood Education Curriculum and Pedagogy

Academics	Curriculum	Curriculum, Science
Bank Street	Curriculum, Emotional	Curriculum, Social
Behavior Management and	Development	Curriculum, Social Studies
Guidance	Curriculum, Mathematics	Curriculum, Technology
Bilingual Education	Curriculum, Music	Curriculum, Visual Art
<i>The Creative Curriculum for</i>	Curriculum, Physical	Developmental-Interaction
<i>Preschool</i>	Development	Approach

Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s)	Mathematics	Play
Direct Instruction Model	Montessori Education	Play and Pedagogy
Documentation	Multicultural and Anti-Bias Education	Play as Storytelling
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ERS)	Open Education	Program for Infant-Toddler Caregivers
Family Literacy	Parenting Education	Progressive Education
High/Scope	Pedagogy	Project Zero
Jumpstart	Pedagogy, Activity-Based/Experiential	The Project Approach
Literacy	Pedagogy, Child-Centered	Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education
Literacy and Disabilities	Pedagogy, Social Justice/Equity	Symbolic Languages
		Waldorf Education

Family and Society

Adoption	Gay or Lesbian Parents, Children with	Philanthropy and Young Children
Biculturalism	Incarcerated Parents, Children of	Poverty, Family and Child Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education
Child Abuse and Neglect	Immigration	Sexual Abuse
Children's Media	Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	Socioeconomic Status (SES)
Computer and Video Game Play	Mothers	Spirituality Development
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Parental Substance Abuse	Technology Curriculum
Culture	Parenting Education	Television
Domestic Violence	Parents and Parent Involvement	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
Families	Peer Culture	Violence and Young Children
Family Literacy	Peers and Friends	Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
Fathers		
Feminism in Early Childhood Education		

Health and Special Needs

Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD)/(ADHD)	Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early childhood, A Taxonomy of Disabilities, Young Children with	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	Division for Early Childhood (DEC)	Gifted and Talented Children in the United States
Autism	Domestic Violence	Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
Cerebral Palsy (CP)	Down Syndrome	Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
Child Abuse and Neglect	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ERS)	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Child Abuse and Neglect, Prevention of	Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)	<i>Journal of Early Intervention (JEI)</i>
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)	Early Intervention	Jumpstart
Deaf Children	Environmental Assessments ECRS only of Safty	Learning Disabilities (LD)
Development Cognitive		Literacy and Disabilities
Developmental Delay		Mental Health
		Montessori, Maria

Nutrition
Obesity
Parental Substance Abuse

Play Therapy
Sensory Processing Disorder
(SPD)

Sexual Abuse
Visual Impairment
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Addams, Jane
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Ashton-Warner, Sylvia
Bandura, Albert
Binet, Alfred
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Bruner, Jerome
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Erikson, Erik H.
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Freud, Anna
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Gesell, Arnold
Gordon, Ira J.
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Hawkins, David and
Hawkins, Frances
Pockman
Hill, Patty Smith
Hunt, Joseph McVicker
Hymes, James L., Jr.
Isaacs, Susan
Kohlberg, Lawrence
Lowenfeld, Viktor
Luria, A. R.
Malaguzzi, Loris
Maslow, Abraham
McMillan, Margaret
McMillan, Rachel
Mitchell, Lucy Sprague
Montessori, Maria
Naumburg, Margaret
Osborn, D. Keith
Owen, Grace
Owen, Robert

Parker, Francis W.
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Pavlov, Ivan Petrovich
Peabody, Elizabeth Palmer
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White, Edna Noble
Whiting, Beatrice
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Professional Journals

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*Contemporary Issues in
Early Childhood*
*Early Child Development
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*Early Childhood Education
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*Early Childhood Research &
Practice (ECRP)*
*Early Childhood Research
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*Early Years: An
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*Journal of
Research and
Development
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*European Early Childhood
Education Research
Journal (EECERJ)*
Exchange
*International Journal of
Early Childhood (IJEC)*
*International Journal
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Education*
*International Journal of
Special Education*

*Journal of Early Childhood
Research*
*Journal of Early Childhood
Teacher Education
(JECTE)*
*Journal of Early
Intervention
(JEI)*
*The Journal of Special
Education Leadership*
NHSA Dialog
*Topics in Early Childhood
Special Education
(TECSE)*
Young Children

Professional Groups, Programs, and Organizations

American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS)	McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership	National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)
Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)	National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA)	National Head Start Association (NHSA)
Association for Constructivist Teaching (ACT)	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development
Black Caucus (NAEYC)	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA)
Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW)	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program	Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation	Reggio-Inspired Teacher Education (RITE)
Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM)	National Association of Child- care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACRRA)	Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)
Children's Defense Fund (CDF)	National Assoc of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE)	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)	National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
Division for Early childhood (DEC)	National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)	The World Forum on Early Care and Education
Early Childhood Music Education Commission (ECMC)	National Committee on Nursery Schools	World Health Organization (WHO)
International Kindergarten Union (IKU)	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)	World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)
International Reading Association (IRA)		Worthy Wage Campaign ZERO TO THREE

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Action Research	<i>Early Childhood Research & Practice (ECRP)</i>	IEA Preprimary Project
Brain Development	<i>Early Childhood Research Quarterly (ECRQ)</i>	<i>International Journal of Early Childhood (IJEC)</i>
Child Care and Early Education <i>Research Connections</i>	<i>Early Years: An Interna- tional Journal of Research and Development European Early Childhood Education Research Journal</i>	Journal of Early Childhood Research
Child Study Movement		Laboratory Schools
Documentation		Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ERS)	High/Scope Perry Preschool Study	Portage Project
<i>Early Child Development and Care</i>		

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Program (PCER)

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Accreditation of Early
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Behavior Management and
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Bilingual Education
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Prevention of
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Multicultural and Anti-Bias
Education
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No Child Left Behind Act
(NCLBA)
Open Education
Parenting Education
Pedagogy
Pedagogy, Activity-Based/
Experiential
Pedagogy, Child-Centered

Pedagogy, Social
Justice/Equity
Peer Culture
Peers and Friends
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Play and Gender
Play and Pedagogy
Play as Storytelling
Play and the Teacher's Role
Playgrounds
Preschool/
Prekindergarten Programs
Professional Development
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The Project Approach
Race and Ethnicity in Early
Childhood Education
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Reggio Emilia Approach to
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Ruggles Street Nursery
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School-Age Care
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Social Curriculum
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Early Childhood
Technology Curriculum
Waldorf Education
War Play

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Child Abuse and Neglect, Prevention of	Jumpstart	National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)	National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA)	No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA)
Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s) (DAP)	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	State Prekindergarten Programs
Early Head Start	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH)
Early Intervention	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
Even Start	Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation	Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
Head Start	National Association of Child- care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)	World Health Organisation (WHO)
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)		
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)		

Preface

Early Childhood Education: An International Encyclopedia is unique in form and contents, providing in four volumes a compilation of understandings, controversies, theories, policies, and practices in early childhood education as currently found in the United States and 10 other nations around the world. Admittedly biased in the attention we pay to U.S. early childhood education and our reliance on English-language professional literature, the Encyclopedia acknowledges prevailing controversies in the field and presents multiple perspectives on early childhood education as understood and practiced in representative nations of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. The Encyclopedia has been prepared with a large and diverse audience in mind, including undergraduate and graduate students of education, child development, social policy, and cross-cultural studies; parents and teachers of young children in the United States and abroad; scholars—national and international; program administrators; policy makers and analysts; and the general public.

The purpose of this four-volume work is to serve as a useful reference source on the period of early childhood and the field of early childhood education. Its principal aim is to provide the curious reader—student, parent, teacher, policy maker, citizen—with information on key historical and contemporary issues, including research, theoretical perspectives, policies and practices, in select nations around the world. Given the rapid rate of change and contemporary pace of knowledge generation, the Encyclopedia shares the same limitations as do other published works—it represents a particular period of time in the history of a field as interpreted by particular groups of people and as written by individuals with their own sense of priorities. The meaning of “contemporary” as reflected in the pages of these four volumes is associated with events and understandings of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The definition of “historical,” as the reader will see when reviewing entries on the history of early childhood education in the various nations included in Volume 4, ranges widely from one cultural context to another. The Encyclopedia’s usefulness is not limited, however, to its representation of the past and the present. The second aim is to present the *status*

quo of early childhood education, as interpreted by the contributors, as a catalyst for continued debate about and engagement in future actions and advocacy on behalf of young children's early learning and development.

Process

This innovative project represents a rich and diverse array of scholarship and opinions about the early care and education of young children. The topics themselves were originally identified by established scholars, teachers, and students of child development and early childhood in the United States. This list was revised several times over the course of production, first in response to international contributors who identified topics essential to their respective national contexts. As the word list circulated, contributors proposed unanticipated or emerging topics of interest and importance. An Editorial Advisory Board consisting of 12 leading scholars in the field was indispensable to the identification of appropriate authors and the editing of entries to insure an accessible reading style for a broad audience. An International Advisory Group insured the selection of qualified authors and relevant topics in each country; each International Advisor also authored the country profile describing contemporary early childhood policies and practices.

Special Features

The scope of this four-volume encyclopedia has both breadth and depth. Volumes 1, 2, and 3 include over 300 entries that reference one hundred years of early childhood education in the United States; Volume 4 includes another hundred-plus entries describing past and present interpretations of early childhood in ten other nations: Australia, Brazil, the Czech Republic, China, France, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The total number of national and international contributors to this encyclopedia is over 300.

Topics covered in this four-volume encyclopedia include those associated with the period and study of *child development*—for example, parenting, cognitive development, and friendships and peer relations; *child care*—for example, infant and toddler care, family child care, and after-school care; *early childhood education*—for example, academics, assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher training; *professional organizations in the field*—for example, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE), and the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA); and English-language *professional journals*—for example, the U.S.-based *Early Childhood Research Quarterly (ECRQ)*, *International Early Childhood Education* from the United Kingdom, and Australia's *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*. Entries on *key historic figures* in the field of U.S. early childhood education—for example, John Dewey and Abigail Eliot—are joined by those whose work has influenced early childhood education around the world—for example, Frederich Froebel and two Italians, Maria Montessori and Loris Malaguzzi.

This encyclopedia does more than serve as a resource to traditional features of the field. In addition to entries on children's social development, early literacy, and various means of assessment, Volumes 1, 2, and 3 include entries on contemporary *concerns and controversies*—for example, the No Child Left Behind Act, corporal punishment, domestic violence, obesity, and poverty. The changing nature of *family structures* is reflected by entries on adoption, children of gay and lesbian parents, and second language acquisition. Multiple perspectives on an early childhood *curriculum and pedagogy* are found in entries on a child-centered pedagogy, pedagogy for social justice, progressive education, and the Reggio Emilia Approach. In addition to entries on contemporary theories of teaching and learning, alternative and post-modern perspectives on the field are represented by entries on the reconceptualist movement, feminist theory, and children's sexuality. The work also includes extensive discussions of the particular needs and potentials of diverse populations of children, including children with disabilities, children of incarcerated parents, and children who are bilingual. The inclusion of multiple entries on complex topics—such as the education of young children with special needs—provides both breadth as well as alternative perspectives on topics of critical importance.

The provision of multiple perspectives goes global in Volume 4 (see the separate introduction to Volume 4). The countries included were selected because their early care and education systems are interesting and dynamic reflections of the cultures they serve. They represent each of the five inhabited continents other than North America, and include societies experiencing rapid political or economic change over the past quarter century (e.g., Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, and South Africa) as well as those characterized by relative continuity over that same period (Australia, France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). Another macro-level variation of interest was in economic systems, ranging from the largely free-market capitalist systems of Australia, Japan, and the United Kingdom (more similar to the United States) to systems in Sweden and France with larger public sectors and greater public investment in social welfare. Volume 4 includes national profiles of current early childhood educational policies and practices in these ten countries. Those seeking to understand how early childhood education serves the goals and needs of nations in Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and Oceania will find rich descriptions and deep insights from authors in these 10 countries beyond North America.

These profiles also create contexts for invited essays from many authors outside the United States on key topics—for example, *literacy, parent education, technology*—selected by international consultants as they correspond to contemporary scholarship and concern in their respective cultural contexts. For that reason, the number of entries per topic varies considerably, with *curriculum* as the sole topic selected by each country. Entries on *family involvement* and *teacher preparation* describe current practices in eight of the ten international settings. Other topics, such as *health, violence, and assessment*, were less frequently selected topics and are addressed by authors in only two or three international settings. Early childhood educators wishing to expand their understanding of curriculum, play, literacy, and creativity will be stimulated by the international perspectives these experts provide. Researchers interested in topics ranging from

teacher preparation to early childhood pedagogy and the ecology of childhood can mine these data for useful insights from a variety of cultural contexts. For parents wishing to understand the singular experience their child is having in the local child care center or family child care setting as it corresponds to children's experiences in settings around the world will find much to ponder. Thus, for example, the reader can review international perspectives on early literacy in six nations outside the United States.

Organization

Topics are arranged alphabetically in Volumes 1, 2, and 3; and countries are presented in alphabetical order in Volume 4. In addition to a table of contents in the front pages of each volume, topics are cross-referenced, with boldfaced items in text and "See also" lines at the ends of entry text. All entries conclude with lists of cited works and additional resources, including books, journal articles, and Web sites. A detailed subject index provides further access to the information in the entries, while a Guide to Related Topics allows readers to trace broad themes and concepts across the entries of the first three volumes. Thus, readers interested in a topic such as "literacy" will find references to multiple entries associated with that topic in Volumes 1, 2, and 3; as well as discussions of literacy in six different national contexts in Volume 4. A detailed introduction places the field of early childhood education into current context.

These unique features insure that this encyclopedia will provide useful information based on current understandings of early childhood policies, theories, and practices. They have also been designed to provoke further debate on the role of early childhood education in the lives of young children and their families, and on the priorities and policies of diverse nations around the world with respect to their youngest citizens. As such, this set serves as both a resource and a catalyst for reflection and global conversation on the broad field of early childhood education.

Acknowledgments

The preparation of this encyclopedia was a joint effort. The two of us conceived and organized its contents together. The coordination of entries, communications with authors, and editing for Volumes One, Two, and Three were carried out primarily by Rebecca New. Mon Cochran assumed primary responsibility for Volume Four, including international correspondence, topic coordination, text editing and assistance with translations.

Supporting us in this work has been a strong social support network of old and new friends and colleagues. Indeed, a project the size of this undertaking could not succeed without the assistance, encouragement, and patience of numerous others. Of course, any future usefulness of this encyclopedia is dependent upon the knowledge and writing skills of its more than 300 contributors. Many of these contributors are also our friends and colleagues; some are our students; still others are new acquaintances. We thank them each for their hard work, their patience with the editing process, and their willingness to persist with requested revisions. There were also many others, behind the scenes as well as working closely with the editors and contributors, whose confidence in our vision was instrumental to its attainment. Although the total number of well-wishers is surely too large to itemize, some who made direct contributions must be acknowledged.

Thanks to Marie Ellen Larcada for the original invitation to do a project on early childhood, and for believing in and advocating for its expansion to include international contributions from around the world. Without this initial support, the project would have remained nothing more than an idea. Once begun, Joanna Krablin (now Joanna Krablin Nelson) became indispensable to the day-to-day operations and, especially, to the ongoing communication with each of the contributors. Her meticulous record-keeping and soothing demeanor kept both editors and contributors on an even keel, even through the roughest of weather. John Wagner of Greenwood played his long-distance role with grace and a sense of humor appointed, providing sage advice, practical editorial assistance, and gentle pressure about looming deadlines—each critical to the completion of this project.

As word lists were generated and authors identified, members of the Editorial Advisory Board reminded us of why we had invited them in the first place. Individually and collectively, Board members joined in email-hosted debates on the merits of topics to include and to leave out, about whom to invite to write essential but unclaimed topics, and how best to organize the entries. All Board members wrote one or more entries, and a majority of them helped with the editing, with an eye to accessible language and comprehensive coverage tempered by respect for each author's writing style and position on the subject. Group discussions with several Board members—Carolyn Edwards, Stacie Goffin, and Sharon Ryan—about U.S. interpretations of curriculum and pedagogy not only resolved critical issues in the production and organization of the manuscript; they were also stimulating in their own right and one of the unanticipated highlights of this project.

Another boon for the editors as well as future readers of this encyclopedia is the International Advisory Group, most of whom were known to one or both of us previously, each of whom became a source of support and inspiration to each other. Their willingness to serve as representatives, collectors, and editors of the material from their own countries was matched by their willingness to share their ideas and questions about various topics in an open forum with other Group members so as to generate a framework for the national discussions. The sort of cross-cultural discussion that went on between Group members is just the sort of dialogue that we hope the encyclopedia will generate.

And last but not least, we wish to acknowledge and thank our families and friends for their patience, indulgence, and support for our work on this project. Far too many late dinners—some missed entirely—were explained by “I was working on the encyclopedia.” It is with a sense of relief as well as gratitude that we can say, by way of a final “thank you,” *it's done*—and we couldn't have done it without you.

Rebecca S. New
Moncrieff Cochran

Introduction

What Is Early Childhood Education?

Early Childhood Education (ECE) has been described as many things: a form of applied child development, purposeful and targeted early intervention, or any of an array of services designed to support the learning and development of children in the first years of life. For most people, as acknowledged in the following passage from a forthcoming publication by one of the editors (Cochran, 2007), early childhood education refers to services provided during the period from birth to the age of compulsory schooling:

Early care and education policies and programs involve the provision of (a) child care to preschool-aged children, and care before and after school to school-aged children while their parents are employed or receiving further education; (b) other child development focused and early educational experiences to preschool-aged children; and (c) child development, child care, and early education information made available to the parents of preschool-aged children.

This definition provides room for many of the more narrowly focused child care and early education programs and providers found across the country, including child-care centers, family and group family child-care programs and networks, preschools, nursery schools, Head Start programs, and prekindergarten programs. It also includes efforts to inform and educate parents about child development, child-care alternatives, and approaches to teaching preschool children appropriate social, cognitive, and language skills. For some in the field, however, this definition does not capture all of the meanings of early childhood education. The term “preschool children” in the definition refers to children during the period immediately prior to their entry into primary school. In the United States, this age group is typically three- and four-year-old children, and the endpoint of this definition wavers between the ages of four, five, and six. In the absence of national policies, kindergarten (for five-year-olds) remains nonobligatory in many

states across the country but is a part of compulsory schooling in others. Further acknowledging the socially constructed nature of this time in the life of the child, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) defines early childhood as the period from birth to age eight. As editors, we agreed to avoid a fixed definition of the age range of the field, given these vast disparities in common use. As the reader will soon learn, a majority of the contributors have interpreted the age range of these volumes to encompass the period from birth through age five. The absence of early childhood perspectives in the primary grades has emerged as an area of major concern to many in the field.

Nor did we delimit the language used to describe the field. For many Americans, child care (of infants and toddlers) is distinct from early childhood education (interpreted as a form of early schooling). For others—the editors included—the *field* of early childhood education embraces the multiple *systems* of early *care* and education, as acknowledged in the previous definition. For some, the politics of this discourse is central to the controversy in that adults who are identified as caregivers typically earn less than those identified as teachers. On the other side of this particular coin is a growing concern about increased efforts to “teach” infants and toddlers so as to promote early brain growth and development. Many of our international contributors refer to systems of early *care* and education.

This introduction to the field of ECE is not a digression; rather, it acknowledges the fact that much of what is thought about and done for young children is wed to the particular sociocultural and historical contexts within which children live and learn and grow up. It is for that reason that we have solicited entries on the ecology of early childhood, represented in Volumes 1, 2, and 3 with entries on the changing nature of families, the growing prevalence of media and technology in children’s lives, and new concerns about children’s physical health (e.g., obesity), and their mental well-being (e.g., violence, drug abuse). We also invited contributors in Volume 4 to describe the “place” of childhood as interpreted and experienced in their various cultural contexts. These entries include discussions on how childhood has changed, both from a legal point of view (as expressed through laws and conventions of children’s rights) as well as the position of the child in various extra-family spaces. Throughout the four volumes of this work, contributors from various fields have responded to our invitation to add to the ongoing debate about the nature and meaning of early childhood, drawing upon literatures in anthropological studies, child development, education, psychology, sociology, social policy, and the history of childhood itself. Their entries provide a compelling case for the complexity of the field, its dependence on collaboration, its varied positioning within diverse cultures, and its inevitable controversial nature.

An Abbreviated History of a Field-in-the-Making

Whatever it means to contemporary readers, the contested terrain of early childhood education has a long history in the United States. Described eloquently by Stacie Goffin and Valora Washington, the **history of U.S. early childhood care**

and education (in Volume 2) is replete with examples that illustrate its almost chameleon-like place in American history. At the same time, a careful review of this history reveals the field as constantly struggling against the status quo, illustrated by the legions of progressive reformers—many of them women—who revolted against the harsh **pedagogy** of traditional schools and advocated for a new, child-centered pedagogy. The ensuing debates about programs designed to rescue children from the streets, or from overzealous practitioners who insisted on straight rows and straight letters, are echoed in contemporary debates about effective pedagogy for young children in Head Start and public preschool programs. These debates are linked to another, that associated with two enduring images of the young child—one “at risk” and the other as “normal”—images generated and reified well over one hundred years ago that reveal much about the politics and the science that have accompanied the endeavors of early childhood educators over the course of the twentieth century. That these two different images have continued, throughout the history of the United States, to be associated with different groups of children as a function of their ability, race, ethnicity, language, or religious background should give pause to professionals in the field and readers of these volumes.

That some philosophical debates have remained constant about children’s early learning needs and capacities should not be interpreted, however, as suggesting that the field has remained stagnant. Far from it. The field of early childhood education as understood and practiced in the United States has grown and changed by leaps and bounds over the course of the last century. These advances in the field reflect changes in society as well as new understandings and creative innovations in the field itself. Beyond the recognition that early childhood is a distinct period of human development, the following four broad themes capture some of the most compelling ways in which the field has grown and struggled over the past 100 years:

- Early childhood as worthy of and requiring scientific study
- Early childhood as a time to intervene
- Early childhood as a time for teaching and learning
- Early childhood as contested terrain

The following discussion is brief because the entries in these volumes take up these issues person by person, policy by policy, innovation by innovation. These features are summarized here to help the reader gain a better appreciation of the status of the field as informed by its history and interpreted by contemporary scholars.

Early Childhood as a Period of Human Development Worthy of Study

It was within the context of industrialization and the modernist project at the end of the nineteenth century that the pursuit of scientific knowledge and social progress began to influence the study and education of young children (Lubeck, 1995). The twentieth century was proclaimed as the “Century of the Child” and students of child development became partners with social advocates for an early childhood education. William James proposed that child study serve as a scientific

basis for pedagogy; and G. Stanley Hall urged mothers to observe and record their children's development. Eventually rejected as not sufficiently "scientific," Hall's informal approaches to child study (see **Child Study Movement**) were replaced by more systematic and "scientific" methods, many based on Edward Thorndike's ideas on educational measurement. As the notion of "ability" as a measurable characteristic became more widely accepted, the emerging field of child development embraced notions of normative development and soon asserted its scientific status over the field of early childhood education. Child Study and Child Welfare Institutes, among them the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, and university **laboratory schools** created new settings in which professionals could work with and study young children. Throughout the second quarter of the century, early childhood institutions continued to develop in response to new understandings of child development. In this new century, amidst growing controversy, much of it fueled by Western European scholars and philosophers, child development theory and research remains the primary knowledge base for early childhood education in the United States. New brain research has added to the conviction that there is much to learn about, and much to promote during, the period of early childhood (see **Brain Development**).

Early Childhood as a Time to Intervene

Early educational initiatives have historically been vulnerable to social causes and, in the United States, many have focused on children deemed underprivileged. Decisions about which children needed an out-of-home educational experience were reflected in the charity movement and the day nursery movement (see **Day Nurseries**); some of these innovations also reflected the changing work habits of American **families**. Concerns about child labor and child welfare drew attention to children's physical and psychological needs—especially those born in **poverty** or to uneducated **parents**. In 1912, the Children's Bureau was established as a symbol of federal interest in young children as well as the beginnings of a concern with the "at risk" child.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, early childhood educational services expanded in directions established decades earlier. Wealthy children stayed home or enrolled in **play groups** or private nursery or preschools (see **Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs**). Children of poor families and/or those whose mothers worked enrolled in federally run or privately funded daycare centers, nursery schools, or **kindergartens**, with family daycare in the homes of nonfamilial adults the most common. At a time when notions of universal stages of **cognitive development** were being detailed and the role of constructive play took on a new importance in promoting early intelligence, President Lyndon Johnson launched Head Start as a centerpiece to the War on Poverty. Begun in 1965 as an eight-week summer program, Head Start soon became a large-scale social welfare program that has varied as a function of politics as well as growing understandings of child development. In 1975, another group of children—those with disabilities—was identified as entitled to publicly funded early intervention services. Eventually renamed and amended in 1997 to include younger children, The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

effectively changed the landscape and the language of early childhood education, from the classroom to **teacher education** to a new field of **early childhood special education**. To date, U.S. policies have continued to prioritize funding for children needing **early intervention** over the provision of universal early care and educational services.

Early Childhood as a Time to Learn

Understandings of early childhood as a time for learning emerged from child development laboratories such as John Dewey's at the University of Chicago. The mantra of "learning by doing" was soon part of the discourse of the early nursery school movement of the 1920s, and children were not the only ones who were busy. Social activists and others committed to progressive education traveled abroad and returned with new perspectives on early educational practices. As Friedrich Froebel's kindergarten came under criticism, the ideas of Maria Montessori gained favor. Abigail Eliot returned from England with new ideas about the "total child" concept, including a focus on parents. Teacher training schools were launched, and by 1925 a **National Committee on Nursery Schools** was convened—a group of women who eventually served as founding mothers of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children**.

As laboratory schools and research centers spread across the United States—some at major research universities—so too did the influence of child development research on teacher preparation. By the 1930s, many middle-income children attended nursery school and/or kindergarten for purposes of enhancing their development and their teachers sought training in departments of home economics, psychology, or education. By mid-century, the kindergarten was increasingly viewed as the first and best place to establish children's "**readiness**" for formal schooling. Jean Piaget's treatises on the child's distinctive ways of reasoning—most disseminated decades after they were first published—provided new windows on children's developmental processes and new rationale for an early childhood education.

Ideas about the period of early childhood—and children's early education—were also reflected in and supported by businesses. For example, by the end of the nineteenth century, major toy companies were marketing toys as educational games. The twentieth century saw a dramatic increase in mass-produced toys, many of them designed for solitary play. Lincoln Logs, Erector sets, and Crayolas enhanced constructive and creative activities and provided new interest, in play that could take place indoors. Subsequent debates on the value and nature of toys, and their roles in educational environments, were sparked by such leading figures as Montessori, Roland Barth, and Erik Erikson, among others. Controversy surrounding the contributions of play to children's learning, identity, and development became a part of the early childhood education discourse.

Early Childhood as Contested Terrain

Each of the above features—the notion of scientific research as a basis for decisions about early childhood, the premise of early intervention into the lives of children deemed "at risk," and the presumed benefits of capitalizing on children's

early learning potentials—has generated controversy as well as new policy initiatives throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

There is little doubt that decisions by governors and state legislatures to invest public revenues in early childhood programs has been influenced by advances in child development knowledge that have occurred during the past quarter century, including new understandings of the infant brain as brimming with neurological potential waiting for stimulation rather than as an empty vessel seeking to be filled.

Such political involvement in ECE has brought long-desired recognition as well as unanticipated challenges, as evidenced by the **No Child Left Behind Act** and new performance standards for Head Start that are more akin to those of elementary schools than what many believe is appropriate for young children. The nature and aims of science are also at stake, as funding agencies increasingly emphasize the importance of empirical evidence to the exclusion of qualitative forms of inquiry in the determination of developmentally appropriate educational practices as essential to maintaining the “scientific” and professional status of the field.

As the stakes increase for research that can demonstrate “what works” in early childhood classrooms, postmodern scholars and contributors to the **reconceptualist** movement question the capacity of research to tell it “how it is,” and caution against the certainty based on empirical knowledge, especially when such “truths” include a standardized image of childhood. Within this oppositional context, professionally derived determinations of quality and **developmentally appropriate practices** in the United States continue to be informed by child development research; and comparative studies of early education, in turn, continue to demonstrate alternative interpretations of high quality early care and education. In short, debates about the role of early childhood education and the consequences of various curricula and teaching methods on children’s lives echo many of the debates of a century ago. And yet the field has much to acclaim, as the following policy initiatives show.

Recent Policy Developments Influencing American Early Childhood Education

Interest and activity in the field of early childhood education has reached an unprecedented level both within the United States and worldwide during the past twenty-five years. In the United States, this attention has been generated by the confluence of many different but complementary trends and policy initiatives. One influence contributing to decisions to invest public revenues in programs serving young children has been the previously described advances in child development knowledge. The accumulation of long-term longitudinal studies showing benefits from participation in intensive early education programs during the preschool years has also resulted in a number of specific policy initiatives and accompanying new debates.

Concern with School Readiness

The first of these trends has been an increased emphasis on insuring that young children are well prepared for success in primary school, stimulated in part by a

National Education Goal established at the federal level in 1991 specifying that “All children in America will start school ready to learn.” “School readiness” became a mantra during the 1990s that has carried over into the new century, and has led to concerted efforts within the fifty states and the District of Columbia to find policies and programs with demonstrated capacity to enhance the competencies and skills needed by young children to be successful in the early grades.

The primary school readiness strategy employed by the states during the past decade has been funding of prekindergarten. At least thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia now fund state prekindergarten programs for four-year-olds (Barnett et al., 2005). As of this writing, four of these states (Georgia, New York, Oklahoma, West Virginia) are implementing universal programs, and two others (Florida, Massachusetts) have laws in place to do so. Currently these state programs serve four-year-olds, although extending this opportunity to three-year-olds is under discussion in several states. Many of these ECE programs serve children in both school and nonschool (child care, family support) settings. Their schedules may be part- or full-day, and typically are limited to the school year.

The Expansion of Comprehensive Early Intervention Systems and Services

Federal laws and policy initiatives have also contributed greatly to the heightened interest in early education and care. By the late 1990s, the federal law required that the states provide for the development of comprehensive early intervention systems for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities, in addition to the services developed for 3–6-year-olds. The interest in the birth-three age period is also reflected in changing policies and programs in Head Start.

Head Start and Early Head Start

The federal Head Start program, although under way since the mid-1960s, received substantial funding increases during the Clinton administration (1993–2001), both for expansion and for program improvement. In 1993, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services undertook a review of the Head Start program that led to a number of recommendations, including the development of services for infants and toddlers living in low-income families (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993). **Early Head Start**, created in 1994, has grown from 68 to more than 650 programs, serving more than 62,000 families and their very young children in the ten years between 1995 and 2004. As importantly, the positive findings from the longitudinal study of the impacts of Early Head Start have stimulated increased interest in services for 0–3-year-olds and their families at the state and local levels (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).

Changes in the Welfare System

A major shift in federal policy toward low-income families occurred in the mid-1990s in the area of welfare reform. In 1996, the Aid to Families with Dependent

Children (AFDC) law, which had provided modest monthly financial support to unemployed single mothers with children as an entitlement, was allowed to lapse. It was replaced by a new law, **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**, which provides funds to the states to assist families with young children under certain conditions. These conditions include immediate participation in work preparation programs and entrance into the labor market within two years. No family is eligible for support for more than five years. One effect of this new emphasis on employment for parents with young children and little income has been more attention by states and local communities to the provision of subsidized child care for these families, much of which is family based and some of which is provided by kith and kin (family child care and family, friend, and neighbor care).

Efforts to Help Parents and Communities Assess Quality

The generally mediocre quality of U.S. early care and education programs has been identified as an enduring problem, that approaches the level of a national crisis, especially when accompanied by concerns regarding the lack of equity (equal access to comprehensive supports) and inadequate infrastructure (NICHD, 2005). One recent policy response to the quality challenge has been the development of quality rating systems. A quality rating system (QRS) is a way of assessing, improving, and publicizing the level of quality achieved by an early childhood setting. State QRS systems have five elements: standards (based on widely accepted guidelines), accountability (through assessment and monitoring), outreach and support to practitioners (to improve quality), financing incentives (such as bonus payments for quality, tiered reimbursement rates based on quality, etc.), and parent education. Thus these systems have dual purposes: to assist the parent consumer in making an educated choice and to improve the overall quality of the ECE system. In 2004, nine states and the District of Columbia reported having a QRS with several levels of quality available throughout their jurisdiction, and a number of other states were in earlier stages of implementation. This quality improvement and parent education strategy has the added advantage of bringing the state's early care and education into the public eye, in the hope that this visibility will expose shortcomings in the system, spur public discussion, and lead to improvements in access and infrastructure as well as program quality.

Immigrants

Social characteristics that exacerbate these issues include the increased presence and diversity of immigrants in American schools and communities. The United States was founded by immigrant settlers from England who left their homes under duress and then took over the lands and lives of Native Americans. By the nineteenth century, the pattern began to change and immigrants—many from southern and eastern Europe—were often, although not always, wealthy members of Jewish, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox religions. These groups came together in the “melting pot” of the United States, where the goal of assimilation

far outweighed the goal of maintaining distinguishing cultural and linguistic traditions. A century later, the United States continues to be a nation of old and new immigrants, but the new immigrants are now helping to constitute a radically different version of U.S. multiculturalism that includes people, languages, and traditions from Arab nations as well as Cambodia, the Caribbean and Latin America, China, South Korea, Russia, and Eastern Europe.

The Economic Impacts of Early Childhood Education

Although the long-term pay-offs from early investment in early care and education services have been understood by social scientists and educators for more than a decade, economists have become fully aware of the implications of these findings for macro-economic policy only since the turn of the century (Dickens, Sawhill, and Tebbs, 2006). The realization by economists that the “return of investment” of early childhood programs is very high over the long term (20 years) and substantial even in the medium term (5–10 years or more) has led them to urge expansion of such services at the state and federal levels, and to recommend that ECE programming be included in the community development strategies promoted by a number of major national foundations. Exciting work is also under way that documents the economic impacts of the early care and educational sector on local community development, through wages paid to the very sizable ECE work force, capital investments in early childhood programs, and the employment opportunities afforded parents who would otherwise need to be caring for their children themselves (Warner et al., 2004; OECD, 2006).

Multiple Perspectives on Early Childhood Education

In conceptualizing this four volume encyclopedia, we did not set out to simplify early childhood education concepts, programs, and policies to appeal to some “average” reader, nor have we sanitized the entries to make the early childhood education field seem cleaner and more coherent than it in fact is. Combining as it does ideas and perspectives from child development, health, education, early intervention, and family support, our intention has been to represent early childhood education as it is—complex, dependent upon collaborative relationships, and unwieldy as a field of study. Because public involvement with young children must by definition encroach upon the private domain of family life, there must be controversy. The cultural dimension of the ECE field is also a given because the field concentrates on that stage of the life course when cultural values, beliefs, and norms are first being introduced to the developing child, and reinforced through daily routines, social practices, program structures, communal activities, and interpersonal relations and interactions. The recently released report by the OECD (2006) attests to the global interest and the cultural diversity in approaches to early childhood. It is at this cultural level that we believe Volume 4 makes its greatest contribution, by allowing readers to explore early childhood education within cultural contexts outside their own, and in so doing to see and appreciate

the cultural dimensions of their own policies and practices in new ways. These features—complexity, controversy, cultural differences, and collaboration—have also characterized development of these volumes and their contents, and this was intentional rather than accidental. They have led to productive conversations among contributors and editors, which hopefully will be extended and expanded by publication of the four volumes. We hope that the ideas and perspectives contained herein will stimulate productive and valued conversations both within and across cultures, so that the lives of all our children and their families can continue to be enriched in new and exciting ways by caring and wise teachers and other caregivers who think globally and teach locally.

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A

AAC. *See* Augmentative and Alternative Communication

ABC. *See* Act for Better Child Care

Abecedarian Program

The Abecedarian Program, also known as the Carolina Abecedarian Project, was established in 1972 at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Abecedarian Program was an experimental early childhood program aimed at studying the long-term effects of high-quality early intervention with infants judged to be at high risk as a result of **poverty** and maternal education. Follow-up studies after twenty-one years indicated that the Abecedarian program intervention had positive long-term results.

The Abecedarian Program began in 1972 and served children of low-income, predominantly African American families. A total of 111 infants, divided into two groups, participated in the study. Fifty-seven infants were assigned to the treatment group and 54 were in the control group. The average age of the infants at the beginning of the program was 4.4 months and all were in good health. Infants in the treatment group received child care and early educational services for six to eight hours per day, five days per week, for fifty weeks per year, up to kindergarten entry at age 5. In addition, families received medical, social, and nutritional services. Children and families in the control group received the additional services, but not the focused early childhood education program.

The early childhood education program consisted of planned activities in specific targeted developmental areas, namely, language, cognitive and fine motor, social and self-help, and gross motor. The child to caregiver ratio was 3:1 for infants and 6:1 for toddlers and preschoolers, and each caregiver was trained to place particular emphasis on language development through daily conversational interactions with the children. The program offered individualized activities for infants and a learning center approach for the toddlers and preschoolers. Parents of children in the program attended social functions, served on the advisory board, and received counseling in child health and development.

During the summer prior to **kindergarten** entrance, the Abecedarian treatment group children participated in a six-week transition program that included other community children. The intent of this program was to introduce the Abecedarian children to others they would encounter in school.

Upon school entry, half the children in both the treatment and control groups were randomly assigned to a school-age intervention program for kindergarten through third grade. A Home-School Resource Teacher (HST) was assigned to a group of fourteen children and served as a liaison between the children's teachers and their families. The HST consulted with the school teachers and provided families with activities to support children's learning of **mathematics** and reading. The HST also referred families to social services as needed. The purpose of this follow-up intervention was to assess the relative impact of timing of intervention on outcomes.

All but seven participants in both the treatment and control groups of the Abecedarian program were assessed at ages three, four, five, six and a half, eight, twelve, fifteen, and twenty-one years. Beginning at age 3 and throughout the study, treatment group children had significantly higher scores on I.Q. tests, as well as reading and math tests. By age 15, significantly fewer treatment group children had been retained in grade or had been placed in special education classes. By age 21, significantly more treatment group children were enrolled in or had graduated from a four-year college, and on average were a year older than control group participants at the birth of their first child.

Because of the school intervention feature of the Abecedarian Program, outcomes can be compared in terms of timing and duration of intervention. Some children received early and continuing intervention, others received **early intervention** only, and still others received later intervention only. In terms of IQ, reading, and math measures, the most persistent positive results were obtained by children in the early and continuing intervention group up to age 12. The next best outcome accrued to children in the early intervention group, followed by the later intervention group. By age 15, however, continuing benefits were discernible only for participants in the two groups that had experienced early intervention. *See also* Cognitive Development; Development, Language; Development, Social; Intelligence Quotient; Intelligence Testing.

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Abuse of Children. *See* Sexual Abuse

Academics

Academics in early childhood education generally refer to the specific focus on academic content areas such as mathematics, reading, writing, and other **curriculum** domains. Although attention to school readiness and to preparing children for success in school has long been part of the early childhood landscape in the United States, controversies over the role and nature of “academics” in early education gained urgency in the 1980s and continue today.

In the context of what was called a back-to-basics movement in education, David Elkind’s books about the “hurried child,” and the “miseducation” of preschoolers sounded an alarm in the field, as he described the pushing down of formal academic content and teaching into the years before **kindergarten**. At the same time, similar concerns about early academic pressures influenced the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** to develop its position statement on **developmentally appropriate practice**. In this publication, NAEYC stated that “in recent years, a trend toward increased emphasis on formal instruction in academic skills has emerged in early childhood programs. This trend toward formal academic instruction for younger children is based on misconceptions about early learning” (Bredenkamp, 1987, p. 1). The position statement was intended to counter these misconceptions with a different view of early development and learning, and guidelines for a different set of practices.

At the same time, several lines of research sought to explore issues around “academic instruction” in early childhood. Typically, the designs of these studies contrasted “academic instruction,” an “academic focus,” or an “academic curriculum” on one hand, with a “child-centered curriculum” or a “developmentally appropriate focus” on the other. Academic instruction was viewed as necessarily didactic and adult-directed, with the child in a passive role, and emphasizing rote learning or drill-and-practice. Contrasted with this was a form of education in which children chose their activities, adults served as facilitators rather than providing instruction, and in which explicit teaching of skills in **mathematics** and **literacy** was considered inappropriate. Results of several studies using this child-centered pedagogy appeared to find disadvantages to the “academic” emphasis, including greater child anxiety and lower motivation on the part of children, without a significant improvement in academic skills except for perhaps some short-term gains in specific knowledge. These results have been found both with economically advantaged and poor children. A well-known longitudinal study in this research tradition was the curriculum comparison study conducted by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, in which outcomes for children who had been randomly assigned to an academically oriented curriculum were compared to those for children in a more child-focused, constructivist curriculum (Schweinhart, Weikart, and Larner, 1986). The researchers interpreted the results as showing clear long-term advantages, especially in the domain of social competence, for the more active, constructivist curriculum rather than the curriculum that emphasized academic skills.

For a number of reasons, these results have not ended the discussion about the place of “academics” in early childhood education. First, the findings of these studies have sometimes been criticized on methodological grounds, and

the interpretation of results has been questioned. Second, deep-seated, differing perspectives on the importance of academic instruction persist not only across cultures but also within cultures. Family and community expectations for what children should learn are frequently in conflict with the beliefs of early childhood professionals. Additionally, several new developments later in the 1990s and into the present make the picture more complex than it may have appeared fifteen years ago.

For example, developmental and educational research, especially in the area of literacy, indicates that one can predict later school success from children's acquisition of specific academic skills such as alphabet knowledge before they enter kindergarten. These kinds of findings have caused even traditional early childhood educators to consider the extent to which they should include some degree of academic instruction in their programs.

Additionally, as every state in the United States has developed or is developing "early learning standards," academic skills are increasingly emphasized to a greater extent in programs for children below first grade. Although they vary in emphasis, state early learning standards typically include "academic" content areas such as literacy, mathematics, and science, with efforts to link or align these standards to those previously developed for grades K-12. And at the federal level, policy debates over the Congressional reauthorization of **Head Start** have focused on strengthening its academic components. Similar issues have surfaced in the United Kingdom (see Volume 4) and other countries with changes in education policies.

In an effort to distinguish early learning from that which takes place in later grades in the United States, the term "preacademic" has sometimes been used to describe foundational school **readiness** skills such as knowledge of shapes, visual perception, copying letters, and so on. Internationally, the **IEA Preprimary Project** used this term in its "Preacademic Skills Measure." Some have criticized this terminology as placing emphasis on the value of early learning for its contribution to what is to come later, rather than having value for its own sake.

Part of the difficulty in conceptualizing early "academics" has been definitional. At times, "academics" refers to a certain type of content (e.g., content and skills in literacy, mathematics, science, and so on), and at other times it refers to teaching methods (e.g., decontextualized, adult-directed, and didactic). Additionally, there has been a failure to distinguish between specific academic skills and broader intellectual competencies and dispositions, which some believe are given short shrift or undermined when narrower academic skills are emphasized. Katz argues that by using project work, the early childhood curriculum might focus on "at least a trio of goals: (1) social-emotional development and (2) intellectual development, and (3) the acquisition of meaningful and useful academic skills" (Katz, 1999, p. 4).

Within this context, the issue today may be reframed, moving away from a dichotomous view. Within this reframed perspective, the question is not whether academic skills and content are an appropriate component of early childhood curriculum and teaching, but how these may be integrated and taught in ways that are engaging and effective. To do this, early childhood educators would need to select academic content that is important and appropriate; continue to

promote social and emotional competence, teacher–child–family relationships, and positive approaches to learning; prepare teachers to integrate academic content effectively; and embed academic content within appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies including investigation and **play**. *See also* Curriculum, Science; Pedagogy, Child-Centered.

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ACCESS. *See* American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators

Accreditation of Early Childhood Programs

Accreditation systems provide an organized process for self-study and improvement, and for program recognition. Accreditation systems exist for a wide range of professional activity, including health care services, museums, adventure clubs, colleges and universities, public school systems, and many other kinds of programs and services. Program accreditation became a visible resource to the early childhood field when the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) launched its center-based early childhood program accreditation system in 1985.

Within the United States, participation in early childhood program accreditation systems is voluntary. Early childhood program accreditation systems are different from regulatory systems such as state licensing standards for child care. States establish regulatory systems to monitor the minimum health and safety of early childhood programs. These public governmental regulations establish the

requirements by which early childhood programs may operate in a particular state and are monitored by government officials for on-going compliance. In contrast, early childhood program accreditation systems in the United States provide a voluntary mechanism by which a profession sets and monitors the standards for its own professional practice.

Limited research exists on the impact of early childhood program accreditation systems on program quality. As the most mature of the early childhood field's early childhood program accreditation systems, NAEYC's accreditation system has been the focus of most of the research. Often, research on accreditation's impact is embedded within larger studies. Because the criteria presently associated with NAEYC's early childhood program accreditation system are also tied to research, it is assumed that participation in NAEYC's early childhood program accreditation system will be beneficial. This confidence appears to be warranted; available evidence suggests that NAEYC-accredited programs provide higher levels of program quality than nonaccredited programs.

Structure and Intent of Early Childhood Program Accreditation Systems

NAEYC accreditation is the field's largest early childhood program accreditation system. An inclusive program accreditation system, NAEYC's accreditation system serves the full array of center- and school-based early childhood programs: not-for-profit; for-profit; faith-based; public, and private. In 2005, over 10,000 US center-based programs had been accredited. Even so, fewer than 10 percent of center-based early childhood programs are NAEYC-accredited. Considerable opportunity exists, therefore, for increasing the number of early childhood programs engaged in a systematic and comprehensive process of self-examination and quality improvement.

After fifteen very successful years of operation, dramatic growth in demand for its accreditation services led NAEYC to launch the Project to Reinvent NAEYC Accreditation in late 1999. This five-year project has resulted in a reinvented accreditation system with a new mission and design, new performance expectations, and newly developed accreditation assessment instruments; the new accreditation system is scheduled to be fully operational in 2006.

NAEYC's center- and school-based early childhood program accreditation system is not the only one available for early childhood programs. The early childhood field also has specialized early childhood program accreditation systems for family child care, school age care, Montessori programs, and for faith-based and for-profit programs, many of which offer Web sites with helpful information. While varying in their sponsorship, cost, focus, performance expectations, and the age range encompassed by the programs being accredited, these accreditation systems share in common their desire to help early childhood programs improve the quality of programs so young children will have better early learning and development experiences. They also share in common a system design that (1) engages programs in a process of self-study against a set of professional standards; (2) provides review by an externally assigned group of individuals; (3) includes a process for deciding whether a program has achieved accreditation; and (4) provides a process

for programs to maintain and renew their accreditation status. Early childhood accreditation systems vary considerably, however, in their program standards and in how they make these four common structural elements operational. They also vary in their emphasis on continuous program improvement versus a set level of program quality as the desired outcome for the accreditation process. Each early childhood program accreditation system includes unique features, processes, and terminology.

By definition, early childhood program accreditation systems are designed to support program improvement and almost all accreditation systems seek to make the process of program improvement an on-going characteristic of the programs they accredit. This desired result is usually achieved through three features of accreditation systems:

- (1) A set of consensually derived professional **standards** that programs use to examine and assess their program's performance; these program standards usually address, but are not limited to, expectations regarding the relationship between children and teaching staff; the management of the program; facilities; **curriculum** and teaching; health performance expectations, and relationships with **families**,
- (2) A process by which programs systematically engage in assessing their performance against the system's program standards, and
- (3) An external review process that provides programs with feedback about the extent to which their self-assessment coincides with what a neutral reviewer would say about the program's performance. Usually this occurs via a site visit, but accreditation systems vary in how they review a program's self-study of its performance against the system's program standards.

Despite these similarities, accreditation systems can vary in their purpose. While all accreditation systems invoke a process of self-study and quality improvement, continuous improvement is the only possible intent of an accreditation process. Three possible functions of program accreditation systems are of particular relevance to early childhood program accreditation: (1) Granting a seal of approval; (2) Providing a report to users; and (3) Conferring assurance. Clarity regarding the purpose of an early childhood program accreditation system is important because it shapes the way in which the accreditation system is designed and managed.

When the accreditation system grants a seal of approval, it validates the claims made by an early childhood program. Programs assess their own performance relative to the profession's performance standards, and outside reviewers confirm the validity of the program's self-assessment. The accreditation system testifies through its validation and accreditation decision-making processes that the program is delivering what it promises. If a program achieves accreditation from a system with this intent, the program is deemed to be doing what it says it does.

When the accreditation system focuses on the users of early childhood programs by providing them with an assessment of a program's performance, it is recognizing families and other purchasers of early childhood programs as consumers—and as the primary customer of accreditation results. Consumers,

in this instance, refer to those individuals who choose and/or pay for an accredited program on behalf of an individual child or children. When the intent of the accreditation system is to provide assessment results to users of early childhood programs (in contrast to the providers of the program), the focus is on evaluating the extent to which an early childhood program's practices coincide with established standards, recognizing their success in conforming to the program standards, and making the program's accreditation status known to families and others so they will use this information in selecting an early childhood program for children. While the stakes of user-focused program assessment are higher for early childhood programs, so are the potential benefits, since achieving accreditation status under these circumstances differentiates high-performing programs from others and elevates their visibility with critical stakeholders, including families.

These two functions might sound similar, but they are conceptually and practically different. When an accreditation process focuses on recognizing programs that comply with its professional program standards, the early childhood program is being evaluated, not just validated, against a set of criteria. The focus is on the program's level of performance. The process of continuous improvement, therefore, is the means to a higher level of performance; it is not, however, the source of accreditation status.

The third function of accreditation is "conferring assurance." The concept is borrowed from industry. Accreditation systems that emphasize this function evaluate programs in terms of their potential to cause damage or harm. Accreditation status provides assurance that the program is safe to use. Achievement of accreditation in this instance affirms that the basic health and safety of children in the program will be protected. In the absence in the United States of consistent public and private regulations that ensure that children are in healthy and safe early childhood programs, this can be an important function for an accreditation system to perform.

No one of these functions is necessarily more important than another. Most early childhood program accreditation systems perform some measure of each function. But the leaders of strong accreditation systems prioritize their functions. They know very clearly what they want their accreditation systems to achieve and organize their work in ways that correspond to their priorities.

Changing Demand for Early Childhood Program Accreditation

With the success of advocacy efforts to increase public and private support for high-quality early childhood programs and the movement for increased accountability, increased demand exists for program accreditation. State legislatures, national organizations such as United Way and Easter Seals, and philanthropic groups have begun to look to early childhood program accreditation as a means for improving program quality, for attaching higher levels of program quality with public and private financial support, and for providing an accountability measure for their investment. More than 30 states now have tiered reimbursement systems or quality rating systems that link public funding with levels of program quality, including achievement of program accreditation. In addition, numerous

organizations that fund early childhood programs serving low-income children have linked their financial support with a program's achievement and maintenance of accreditation status.

These public and private policies are helping drive demand for early childhood program accreditation, making achievement of accreditation status more high-stakes for early childhood programs, and placing more pressures on early childhood program accreditation systems to function efficiently, effectively, and reliably.

The increased visibility of early childhood program accreditation also offers new opportunities for the early childhood field. It offers early childhood program accreditation systems and their sponsors the opportunity to make the program standards for high-quality early childhood programs more visible to those who can help make quality programs more available to young children, families, and communities. Ultimately, children most benefit from being in caring and engaging early learning environments. Early childhood program accreditation, especially in conjunction with the support services increasingly available to programs seeking accreditation, offers an effective strategy for increasing the daily quality of children's out-of-home early learning experiences and for improving the impact of these experiences on their learning and development.

Information on NAEYC's accreditation reinvention project can be found in NAEYC's journal, *Young Children*, in articles published bimonthly between July 2000 and September 2004. Information is also available on NAEYC's Web site www.naeyc.org. See also Teacher Certification/Licensure.

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ACEI. See Association for Childhood Education International

ACT. See Association for Constructivist Teaching

Act for Better Child Care (ABC)

The Act for Better Child Care (the ABC bill) was introduced to Congress in November 1987 as the result of efforts by the Alliance for Better Child Care, a coalition that eventually included over 130 national groups. The goal of the bill was to improve the availability, affordability, and quality of child care by providing new federal funds to states. This bill was eventually revised and renamed, culminating in the **Child Care and Development Block Grant**. The history of the ABC bill describes a critical period in the history of early childhood education in the United States and the influence of coordinated advocacy efforts.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon had vetoed comprehensive child-care legislation that had passed the House and Senate with broad bipartisan support,

thereby putting a chill on the child-care debate at the federal level for almost 15 years. The issue began to regain currency in 1984 when Representative George Miller (Democrat from California) selected child care as the first priority issue for his new Select Committee on Children and Youth. The Committee held a series of hearings and issued a report on **child care**. During the late 1980s, interest in child care skyrocketed. Mothers had gone to work in record numbers but child-care policy lagged behind. By 1986, the huge gap between women's labor force participation and public investments in child care had generated significant and continuous press attention, which helped to finally force the issue to the top of the Congressional agenda. That year, the **Children's Defense Fund** and a host of national organizations representing children, child-care providers, labor unions, religious groups, educators, women, and others joined together to begin a process that resulted in the Act for Better Child Care.

These efforts were fueled by the belief that if a child-care bill was moving in Congress prior to the 1988 presidential election, child care could become a top issue in the presidential campaign debate. The coalition sought to draw enough attention to the issue to ensure that a bill would be enacted during the first year of a new president's term.

In the summer of 1986, a steering committee began a year-long process of working with representatives of national organizations and early childhood advocates across the country to develop a child-care bill. The original bill provided child-care assistance to families earning up to 115 percent of their state's median income. Funds were also targeted to improve the quality and expand the supply of child care. The bill authorized \$2.5 billion annually to be sent to states based on a formula that factored in the number of young children, state per capita income and number of children receiving free and reduced-price lunch. States could use the funds to offer parents certificates to purchase child care or for contracts with providers. In addition, a percentage of funds was reserved to help part-day preschool programs provide full-day, full-year services. Providers receiving funds were required to meet federal standards that would be developed by an advisory committee.

On November 19, 1987, a joint House Senate press conference was held to introduce the ABC bill, which had 126 Representatives and 22 Senators as cosponsors. The lead cosponsors of the Senate bill were Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Senator John Chafee (R-RI). The House version was cosponsored by Representative Dale Kildee (D-MI) and Representative Olympia Snowe (R-ME). Congress debated the bill during 1988 and child care indeed became a prominent issue in the presidential election campaign with both candidates supporting an expanded Federal role in child care. In January 1989, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) asked to replace Senator John Chafee as the Senate bill's chief Republican cosponsor and became a strong advocate for the bill's passage.

As debates over the bill proceeded, President George Bush supported using tax credits as opposed to providing direct **child-care subsidies** to families. The Democrats who controlled both the Senate and House took advantage of the Administration's willingness to extend tax credits for low-income families and added an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to the ABC bill before it was brought to the Senate floor for a vote.

The ABC bill passed the Senate in June 1989. It passed the House in October 1989 but because of budget technicalities, had to pass the House again in March 1990. Congress was scheduled to adjourn in October 1990.

That fall, an unusual conference took place. The Senate worked out a compromise bill with the White House. These discussions did not include the House because of jurisdictional conflicts between various House committees. The Senate and White House announced their agreement on a compromise bill during a press conference that included Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-ME) and Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-KS), as well as the key Senate sponsors of the bill, Senators Dodd, Kennedy, and Hatch. The Senate then met with the House to reconcile any remaining differences. On November 5, President Bush signed a Budget Reconciliation bill that included the ABC bill, renamed the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and authorized \$750 million in fiscal year 1991, \$825 million in fiscal year 1992, \$925 million in fiscal year 1993, and such sums as necessary for fiscal years 1994 and 1995 for child-care assistance to low-income working families and to improve the quality and expand the supply of child care. It also included a small additional program, the "At-Risk Child Care Program." This program guaranteed states \$1.5 billion over five years to help low-income working families, who were at risk of being on welfare, pay for child care. In addition, the bill provided for \$12.4 billion over five years to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for working families with children under age 19, as well as a very small Supplemental Credit for Infants costing \$700 million over five years.

Federal standards were extremely controversial, and were eliminated early in the process. When the bill went to the Senate floor for a vote in June 1989, the standards were replaced by **state standards** because Senate leaders believed that federal standards would have led to a filibuster on the Senate floor and that they would not have the 60 votes necessary for cloture to end the filibuster. The final standards that were the product of negotiation with the Senate and the Bush White House required that programs had to meet applicable state child-care **licensing** or registration requirements. Providers that were not required to be regulated by the state had to meet very minimal health and safety standards, with the exception of certain relatives. The bulk of funds were reserved for child-care assistance. Families earning up to 75 percent of their state's median income were eligible for help. States had to offer parents the choice of a certificate or contract to purchase child care. Twenty-five percent of total funding was reserved for quality improvements and initiatives targeted to early childhood development and before-and **after-school child care**.

While many compromises were made along the way, advocates were heartened by the results as the process led to the first comprehensive federal child-care program and also a major expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit. This not only helped low-income parents but also countless child-care providers whose incomes were low enough to qualify them for the EITC.

The battle for a federal child-care program was successful in large part because of a strong grassroots campaign that was driven by the child-care community with support from labor, children's organizations, women's groups, religious organizations, state and local elected officials and many others. It happened without the assistance of e-mail and fax machines and involved countless mailings and

phone calls. The campaign was kicked off by meetings in almost 40 states that brought together a coalition of groups that were spearheading their state's efforts to win passage of the bill. The next several years were focused on ongoing communications with these state coalitions urging them to contact their members of Congress both through letters and phone calls and visits, write letters to the editors and op-eds, visit their editorial boards, and participate in various events and projects to build support for the bill. Governors, state legislators, mayors, religious, and business leaders also supported the legislation and appeared at a series of events. In addition there were targeted media efforts involving editorial memorandum, briefings for reporters in Washington, radio actualities, radio public service announcements, op-eds, letters to the editor, a significant number of press conferences, and paid media.

Advocates strongly believed that if a child-care bill was not enacted into law by the time the Congress adjourned in the fall of 1990, it would be almost impossible to sustain momentum on this issue through another session of Congress. They planned a series of activities to be staged in September. Findings from a Children's Defense Fund report about shortcomings in state child-care licensing provisions and other gaps in quality were released right after Labor Day. The report generated hundreds of stories. Miles of paper chains were put together by the grassroots network across the country and were sent to Washington. Staff working for members of the alliance stretched the chains from the Capitol steps to the White House in mid-September. Members of Congress then attached the chains to their doors. Mothers whose children died or were injured in child care also held a September press conference in the Capitol and fanned out to visit their members of Congress to urge them to finish work on the ABC bill.

The extraordinary efforts of thousands of child-care advocates, parents, and public officials made child care a must win issue for the Congress and the Bush Administration. The Act for Better Child Care remains as a source of inspiration for child-care advocates and early childhood education professionals.

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Helen Blank

Action Research

Action research is generally understood as a type of applied research in which the researcher is actively involved in the setting that is the focus of inquiry as well as in the research itself. Most often, the aim of action research is to investigate practice (as in the case of teacher action research) and to improve the quality of an organization and its performance. Bogden and Biklin (1982) describe it as "the systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change" (p. 215).

Action research is usually organized in a seven-step, iterative cycle that begins with (1) identifying a problem, proceeds through (2) observation, (3) data collection, and (4) reflection on the dimensions of the problem, to (5) designing a change that addresses the problem, (6) implementing the change/taking action, and (7) assessing its effectiveness through observation, data collection, and

reflection. At the heart of this process is systematic reflection on action that leads to action. Action vis-à-vis action research, as McCutcheon and Jung note, “implies that the practitioner will be acting as the collector of data, the analyst, and the interpreter of results” (p. 144).

As a method of inquiry, action research is situated in a very rich and quite mature tradition of research that reaches back to Dewey (1933) and his call for “reflective action” that would lead toward inquiry-oriented practice. As a specific form of research, it is most often associated with the work of Lewin and his colleagues in the 1940s and 1950s whose work was centered on social and psychological problems created by prejudice, segregation, and isolationism. Today, action research figures prominently in formal inquiry in a variety of areas from education to government to business—any area in which understanding interrelationships and practice is useful in determining ways to initiate and support change.

The methodological precedents for action research emerge from qualitative research particularly in the areas of anthropology and sociology—fields that seek to describe the human condition in all of its variety. The analytic methods employed in action research are often generated from and synchronous with actual practice. Thus, a teacher doing action research might use everyday formative assessment tools like classroom maps, running records, or samples of student work to address her inquiry; and a social worker might use interviews, anecdotal notes, and log entries to address hers. Because action research is capable of bringing together numerous variables to define understandable portraits of the complex dynamic of human interaction, it can serve both as a contrast and a complement to experimental studies where the variables must be few and precise.

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Frances Rust

ADD/ADHD. See Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Addams, Jane (1860–1935)

Jane Addams is best known for opening Hull-House in the heart of the industrial district of Chicago on September 8, 1895. Its purpose was to serve the needs of the poor, most of whom were first- and second-generation newcomers to America seeking work during the Industrial Revolution. She modeled Hull-House after Toynbee Hall, a settlement she had visited in London. Settlements were part of a social movement based on a desire by the more privileged to cross social class lines and offer more than traditional relief to the less fortunate. She regarded the educational activities, philanthropic, civic, and social undertakings of the Settlement to be different manifestations of an attempt to socialize democracy—to put theory into practice. During a visit to East London, she witnessed the

poorest of the poor bidding on fruit and vegetables so rotten they were not fit for sale. She later wrote that she was never able to escape the memory of the white arms and hands waving in a huddle to bid for the decaying food. She devoted her life to caring for the underprivileged and oppressed and to working for the rights of workers, women, and children.

The first organized undertaking of Hull-House was a kindergarten, conducted by a volunteer teacher in the parlor. Mothers working long hours in factories were forced to leave their children locked inside their tenements, or during hot summer days they were locked out. Ms. Addams reported that these children began to wander into the kindergarten and fill the cool halls of Hull-House, where they were fed and bathed. As the Settlement rooms became filled with children, an apartment was leased. Finally, a special building was designed and constructed on a side street, known as the Children's House. It was sustained by Hull-House as a day nursery for sixteen years before being taken over by a charity. Ms. Addams recognized how important the Children's House was for the health and safety of the tenements' youngest members, and further how vital it was for the connection it provided to the immigrant mothers who could be taught how to make life in America more possible. Hull-House was expanded to include an art gallery, a public library, the first public playground, public baths, Boys' Clubs, gymnasiums, and much more. At its peak, Hull-House was used by at least 2,000 people a day.

In her first autobiography, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1961), Ms. Addams acknowledged the ideological challenges passed down by her father, a Quaker pioneer and miller, who began the Republican Party in Illinois. His close friendship with Abraham Lincoln underscored his determination to help build America—the great experiment in democracy. Born on September 6, 1860, in Cedarville, Illinois, Ms. Addams was among the first women to graduate from Rockford College in 1882. She recalls an inner restlessness as an educated woman in a time when women did not vote and were not expected to accomplish much more than their grandmothers. Despite these limitations, she was the first president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, campaigned for social justice and, as a delegate to the first national convention of the Progressive Party in 1912, seconded the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt. In 1931 she was cowinner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Ms. Addams died in Chicago on May 21, 1935.

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Ann-Marie Clark

Adoption

Adoption, which involves the legal transfer of parental rights and responsibilities from birth parents to adoptive parents, is a worldwide phenomenon with

a long history. In recent years, over 120,000 children have been adopted annually in the United States (National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, 2004). The adopted child, adoptive parents, and birth parents constitute the adoption triad: three persons who are profoundly affected by this process. Most adoptive placements are made by public child welfare agencies or licensed private adoption agencies. Attorneys also facilitate independent adoptions when children are placed with adoptive parents directly by birth parents.

Throughout many countries in which adoption is practiced, there are variations in the age when children are adopted, and the type of adoption. In the United States, children can be placed in adoptive homes as infants or not until they reach adolescence. Transracial adoptions involve the placement of children of one race or ethnicity with a family of a different racial or ethnic background; and in international adoptions, children from one country are placed with families in other countries. In some countries (e.g., the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands) some children who are placed internationally also are in transracial adoptive families. Adoptions also vary in their degree of openness—the amount of information or contact to be shared between birth and adoptive parents. Confidential adoptions have no contact; mediated adoptions feature the sharing of nonidentifying information through a third party (typically an attorney or adoption agency); and fully disclosed adoptions occur when identifying information is shared and often includes in-person meetings.

In the past forty years, adoption has become more widely known and accepted, due in part to the increasing numbers of children of many ages in need of permanent families who can provide a nurturing, safe, and supportive home. The increase also has been due to the recognition by adoption practitioners that good homes can be found among families of different races/ethnicities, income levels, marital statuses, ages, nationalities, etc. As a result, many more individuals have a connection to adoption. Although 2–4 percent of children in the United States are adopted, 65 percent of the population in the United States is touched by adoption, as a relative, friend, or member of the adoption triad (Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2002).

Adoption and Children's Development

One important question that gets asked about adoptees is whether they develop more positively than they would have in foster care, institutions or with their birth families. Coping with the loss of the birth parent can be an important theme for adopted children. However, research shows that children who are adopted tend to have a better emotional and behavioral adjustment than do children who remain in foster care, in institutions, or with birth families who continue to have serious problems that impair parenting. For example, adoption in infancy can greatly minimize the many problems in learning, social relationships, and emotional development among children who were prenatally exposed to drugs (Barth, Freundlich, and Brodzinsky, 2000). Thus, adoption can be an appropriate solution for children whose birth families fail to provide sufficient nurturance and safety.

Another question posed about adopted children is how they fare in comparison to nonadopted children in families that more closely resemble their adoptive

families. Adopted children tend to receive more mental health services, in part, because adoptive parents are more likely to seek out support services than are nonadoptive parents. Most research indicates that adopted children also tend to have more adjustment problems than nonadopted children. These problems include school adjustment and learning problems, impulsive, hyperactive, or rule-breaking behavior, and drug use. However, for most adopted children, these problems fall within what is considered a normal range of functioning.

Parenting the Preschool Adopted Child

Once the child has been placed in the family, parents ideally begin the process of creating a care-giving environment that promotes a healthy and stable parent-child bond. Security in **attachment** is facilitated when parents are emotionally attuned to the needs of their child and when there is a good match between parental expectations and the child's characteristics and behavior. Research generally has found little difference in the quality of attachment between infant-placed adopted children and their mothers compared with nonadopted mother-infant dyads.

The advent of language and symbolic thought during the toddler and the preschool years paves the way for adoptive parents to begin the process of sharing adoption information with their child. Unfortunately, there is often a great deal of confusion and anxiety among adoptive parents as they begin this process. Whereas previously the primary foci of the couple were on *integrating* the child into the family and fostering a strong and secure parent-child bond, there is now a growing recognition of the importance of initiating a process of *family differentiation*. This is the developmental period in which most parents are advised by adoption professionals in the United States to begin to talk to their children about adoption. Children might be told of their connection to two families—one that is familiar and the source of their emotional security; the other that is unknown but the source of their biological origins. During this phase of family life, parents face numerous uncertainties about what information to share, when to share it, and in what ways the discussion about adoption will have an impact on their child. Some parents consciously decide not to tell their children about the adoption, a decision believed by many adoption and mental health professions to increase the psychological risk for these youngsters should they find out at some later date that their parents chose not to reveal information about the nature of their adoptive family relationships.

Although disclosing adoption information during the preschool years does not appear to undermine children's psychological adjustment or to disrupt parent-child attachment, it also does not lead to much genuine understanding about adoption, which can be confusing to parents who might overestimate their child's adoption knowledge. Once the telling process begins, parents typically report a growing curiosity on the part of children about birth and reproduction. Children usually begin to label themselves as adopted and quickly learn their "adoption story" at least in some rudimentary form. However, for many adoptees, this early adoption knowledge is superficial as it is not until 5-7 years of age that most children begin to clearly differentiate between birth and adoption as alternative ways of entering a family (Brodzinsky, Singer, and Braff, 1984).

Factors that Buffer Adoptive Families

Although the challenges faced by adoptive parents in the early period of family life cycle are greater, on average, compared with those faced by nonadoptive parent, there are also a number of factors that help buffer the adoptive couple from these unique stressors, leading to quite positive outcomes in postplacement child, parent, and family adjustment. Adoptive couples usually are older than nonadoptive couples when they first become parents, and they are more likely to be settled into their careers and to be more financially secure. They also have been married longer before becoming parents than nonadoptive couples, which may be associated with greater marital sensitivity, communication, and stress management. The adoptive couple is likely to feel a powerful sense of fulfillment with the arrival of a child, which in turn may serve as a protective factor.

Moreover, the need to work with adoption agencies in order to become parents has a beneficial impact on adoptive parents in that they often have more formal preparation for the transition to parenthood than nonadoptive couples. Over the past two decades, adoption-related services and counseling have evolved to address the enduring and changing needs that adoptive families have. Innovative models, such as Generations of Hope (Eheart and Hopping, 2001), demonstrate how the planned creation of a community of foster and adoptive families and senior citizens, with support services integrated into the community, can provide critical supports for families adopting from foster care. Some agencies facilitating transracial adoptions now require prospective parents to undertake an experiential examination of race/ethnicity prejudice and its potential impact on transracial adoptive families. Medical clinics featuring coordinated medical care for children adopted from institutions in other countries now operate in several major cities. Additional examples of innovative and promising practices can be found on The National Adoption Clearinghouse Web site (<http://naic.acf.hhs.gov>).

Early childhood professionals also have a critical role to play in helping children and parents in adoptive families. Because of the diversity among adoptive families in talking about adoption and living as an adoptive family, it is important for early childhood professionals to provide an open and safe atmosphere for parents to share information about the family's adoption-related choices. With knowledge about the choices made by adoptive families of children in their class, teachers can help proactively and reactively. Proactively, teachers can plan activities, discussion and experiences designed to promote children's understanding of the typical variations in families. Reactively, teachers must be prepared to use "teachable moments" as foundations for additional learning, whether these moments arise from peers' naïve questions, teasing, or adults' comments. The ultimate goal would be for teachers to provide experiences in which all children and members of their families feel respected and supported for their choices in becoming a family.

Conclusions

Adoption provides children and families with a viable alternate path to family life, one that features similarities to and differences from biological family life.

The keys to successful parenting of adopted children include good preparation, realistic expectations, effective behavior management skills, good communication, and adequate supports—all of which are common to other families, as well. Parenting adopted children poses unique challenges and complications for family life and children's development; however, most adoptees tend to adjust as normally as do nonadopted children. Early childhood professionals can enhance their support of adoptive children and families first by developing a heightened professional awareness of adoption and its variations, and second, by incorporating this understanding in programming for and interactions with all children. *See also* Development, Emotional; Development, Language; Parenting Education; Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education; Symbolic Languages.

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Ellen E. Pinderhughes and Neda Bebiroglu

Advocacy and Leadership in Early Childhood Education

To *advocate* is to give voice to a particular issue or concern through the processes of persuasion, argument, or direct action intended to draw attention to the cause and propose concrete changes or solutions. In early childhood education, the work of advocacy entails speaking up on behalf of young children and their families in order to create more just, equitable, and effective social policies or community services. In addition, early childhood advocates often teach parents to become self-advocates, capable of speaking directly to teachers, administrators, or policymakers on matters that affect their ability to care for and educate their own children and the children of others.

Early childhood advocates focus on the ethical, social, and practical responsibilities that arise in the context of work with children and families. Advocates identify social and personal barriers that prevent families and communities from

fostering children's healthy development. In turn, advocates challenge those barriers and participate in their removal through changes in practice or policy at the local or national level. In doing so, advocates often take conscious and calculated risks aimed at altering the status quo in order to improve the lives of young children. Advocates use a range of tools that incorporate comprehensive data about the status and plight of children and apply specific strategies meant to change the ways in which institutions or communities respond to the needs of children. Such strategies may include collaborative, participatory organizing at the grassroots level as well as less direct means such as support for political candidates or testifying before local, state, or federal legislative bodies in order to enact child-focused social policies. In this light, advocates must be capable of analyzing and critiquing federal and state social policies as they affect the lives of young children. Advocates must be able to effectively communicate in oral and written forms their understandings, views, and positions on issues related to children's well-being, for both lay and professional audiences.

The Arguments Used by Advocates

Early childhood advocacy generally relies on multiple rationales to argue on behalf of children and families. The *custodial* rationale argues that society has a collective or shared responsibility to care for young children while their parents work. A *developmental* rationale asserts that high-quality early experiences both in home and out of home benefit young children and provide them with the skills and dispositions necessary to succeed in school and community. A *human capital* rationale assumes that early financial investment in the lives of children produces long-term returns that will ultimately save society subsequent expenses associated with remediation, compensation, or even incarceration. A *citizenship* rationale, more prevalent in western European nations, views young children as citizens with fundamental civil and human rights, including access to the same level of support and education enjoyed by youth and adults. Finally, an *ethical* rationale suggests that society should provide high-quality, accessible, affordable services to young children and their families because it is the right thing to do. This moral stance is concerned less with saving money, enabling parents to work outside of the home, or improving children's later academic achievement than it is with acknowledging a collective responsibility to and for all citizens, including those in the earliest stages of their lives.

Early childhood advocates are especially concerned with enhancing the lives of children who experience social and/or economic disadvantage because of their race, ability, ethnicity, native language, family income, or place of residence. In this light, the work of advocates has been especially influenced by the strategies and successes of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement beginning in the late 1950s, in which a wide range of methods have been applied effectively including civil disobedience, street protests, petitioning, legislative action, and community organizing.

The focus of civil rights advocacy on universal social justice has become a core principle of child advocacy. In 1973, the **Children's Defense Fund (CDF)** was founded by Marian Wright Edelman to "provide a strong, effective voice for

all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. [The Children's Defense Fund] pays particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities" (from the CDF mission statement). A year later, the *Harvard Educational Review* published a landmark collection of essays on "The Rights of Children," the first comprehensive set of arguments that the social and economic needs of children deserve as much attention as those of other disenfranchised groups in the United States. The social justice emphasis in child advocacy has also been advanced considerably by the writings of Jonathan Kozol over the past two decades in such books as *Savage Inequalities* (Kozol, 1991) and *Amazing Grace* (Kozol, 1995). This focus on social and economic justice has expanded in recent years to include such areas as children's sexual understandings and identity and the particular realities of AIDS as experienced by parents and teachers as well as children (cf., Silin, 1995). Evolving social conceptions of **inclusion** and children's rights have been responsive to such realities, in turn demanding of advocates a broader set of lenses than has been the case in the past.

In the 1980s, child advocates were especially challenged by the Reagan administration, which attempted to significantly reduce federal support for many of the antipoverty and civil rights policies enacted in the previous two decades. The administration attempted to reduce funding or weaken regulations for programs such as **Head Start**, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), and federal subsidies for low-income families in need of day care. At the same time, however, the human capital rationale described earlier was gaining credence, partly because of the values that became dominant during the Reagan years. Corporate and political leaders began to see that the inability of the United States to compete economically with **Japan** (see Volume 4) and Western Europe was due in part to insufficient investment in the lives of young children.

This growing concern led directly to the 1989 Education Summit, at which the nation's governors declared a set of National Educational Goals for the first time ever. The first of the eight goals stated, "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." This simple statement in turn led to a national Success by Six movement organized by the United Way in conjunction with hundreds of community-based organizations. Also in 1989, the United Nations promulgated the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which proclaimed that, "childhood is entitled to special care and assistance [and therefore] the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community." These two statements, one at the national level and one at the international level, have provided significant support for those who advocate on behalf of children and families.

Principles of Advocacy

As noted earlier, early childhood advocates exercise a range of strategies depending on their circumstances and goals. The options can be characterized along the following dimensions:

Internal versus external advocacy. Internal advocacy occurs when teachers, social workers, health care workers, or others use their positions within schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and other child-serving organizations to speak on behalf of children and families. These professionals attempt to improve the way the institutions in which they work meet the needs of their clients, patients, and customers by arguing for more responsive, accessible, and affordable services. External advocates are those who are not employed by the organization of concern or who do not live in the immediate community but who identify systematic injustices or inequities that they believe should be addressed. Often, internal and external advocates form alliances to put pressure on administrators or elected officials in order to stimulate change.

Individual versus organizational advocacy. Advocates may work on behalf of individuals or through formal advocacy organizations. In the former, friends, allies, guardians, or lawyers speak on behalf of a child or family that does not otherwise have the skills, knowledge, or confidence to speak for themselves. This is especially effective when a child or family is confronted with a complex bureaucracy with multiple regulations that require expertise to negotiate or receive the desired service. Formal advocacy organizations are concerned with practices or policies that affect groups of individuals or multiple communities. The Children's Defense Fund cited earlier is perhaps the most widely known of these advocacy organizations. Others include the Child Welfare League of America and the National Association of Child Advocates, which represents state-level organizations such as the Children's Alliance of New Hampshire or the Advocates for the Children of New York. The **National Association for the Education of Young Children's** (NAEYC) annual Week-of-the-Young-Child, held each April, is another example of advocacy conducted by an organization consisting of some 100,000 early childhood teachers and administrators.

Data-based advocacy. In addition to operating from core values such as a commitment to social justice, advocates rely on empirical data to argue on behalf of children. To muster support for the issue being addressed, advocates turn to state and national data sources provided in the annual Kids Count profiles of child well-being published by the Anne E. Casey Foundation or the State of America's Children reports released each year by the Children's Defense Fund. At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and the National Center for Educational Statistics are important sources of data for child advocates.

Coalition building. Perhaps the most essential strategy for child advocates is to form coalitions with others in order to speak with one voice that will be heard by those who are in a position to effect change. The child advocacy organizations mentioned earlier are one example of such coalitions or alliances. In a democratic society with elected governing bodies, the power of numbers is the key to the change process. Often alliances of groups with similar missions or values are developed by advocacy leaders. Teachers, social workers, and community organizers may come together to advocate for after-school care for elementary-aged children. Judges, lawyers, and police may share work together to strengthen child

protection systems in order to reduce child abuse and offer prevention programs. Business leaders and real estate agents might be concerned about the affordability of housing in a community in order to reduce homelessness. The most effective advocacy coalitions bring all these groups together in nonpartisan organizations such as the Voices for Katrina's Children network formed after the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes and supported by the Packard Foundation.

The Link between Leadership and Advocacy

Early childhood educators are expected not only to be effective advocates, but they must also take on broader leadership roles in their schools, agencies, communities, and at the state and national level. By nature, good advocates make good leaders, as they articulate the needs of children and families and offer concrete solutions to the barriers that face those who are too young to vote or whose economic or social status puts them on the margins. In this light, early childhood educators must not only be good teachers, but they must also understand the processes of systems change, policy development and implementation, how to use the media effectively, how to supervise and support beginning teachers, and how to connect children and families to networks of social services.

Lambert et al. (1995, p. 47) offer a comprehensive inventory of the skills most needed by those who serve as leaders in social service organizations. These include the following:

- A sense of purpose and ethics, because honesty and trust are fundamental to relationships.
- Facilitation skills, because framing, deepening, and moving the conversations about teaching and learning are fundamental to constructing meaning.
- An understanding of constructivist learning for all humans.
- A deep understanding of change and transitions, because change is not what we thought it was.
- An understanding of context so that communities of memories can be continually drawn and enriched.
- A personal identity that allows for courage and risk, low ego needs, and a sense of possibilities.

These are broad concepts but are applicable to early childhood advocates who work simultaneously with children, parents, colleagues, policymakers, community leaders, and other allies. By definition, the most effective leaders will also be conscientious and articulate advocates. As Rodd (1994, p. 2) states it, "Leadership is about vision and influence. . . . Leadership [is a] process by which one person sets certain standards and expectations and influences the actions of others to behave in what is considered a desirable direction. Leaders are people who can influence the behavior of others for the purpose of achieving a goal." As indicated throughout this entry, these leadership attributes are synonymous with those of effective child advocates. *See also* National Education Goals Panel.

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Bruce L. Mallory

Almy, Millie (1915–2001)

A twentieth-century leader in the field of early childhood education and psychology, Millie Almy played a critical role in shaping the science of child development, identifying the contribution of play to children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, and interpreting and popularizing the theories of Jean Piaget. Dr. Almy's career in early childhood education began during her undergraduate studies at Vassar College, where she majored in Child Study and worked in the Vassar nursery school. Following college and prior to attending Teachers College at Columbia University, where she earned her master's and doctorate degrees, Dr. Almy taught in a day nursery and directed a regional alliance of federally funded nursery schools near Buffalo, NY, for the Works Progress Administration, as well as federally funded "Lanham Act" child-care centers established during World War II.

Dr. Almy is widely credited with bringing Piagetian theory into the discourse about young children in the United States, and was widely acknowledged as one of the foremost Piagetian interpreters and theorists in the world. She helped to explain how young children came to understand complex subjects such as science, **mathematics**, and literature through direct experience, manipulation, and visualization before they could understand abstract concepts. Her writings and research about **play** and observation of young children remain classics in the field. Her scholarship reflected her extensive "hands-on" experience with young children in early care and education programs. She served on the faculty of Teachers College at Columbia (1944–1948, 1952–1971) and of the Education School at the University of California at Berkeley (1971–1980), and was President of the National Association of Nursery Educators, as well as a delegate to the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children.

Dr. Almy recognized that the United States "needed greatly expanded programs for young children and their families." She also believed that the success of early childhood programs depended on "the availability of a special kind of early childhood educator . . . described as a double specialist, one who could both teach young children and assess their development, work equally well with adults as well as with children, think concretely as one must in dealing with children, but also think abstractly and formally as one must in planning and executing programs and researching them." To this end, she led an Interdisciplinary Program for Leaders in Day Care at the University of California at Berkeley from 1974 to 1978, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, reflecting her belief that teachers need information from diverse disciplines as well as skills from

other professions. She favored professional training for those working with young children, and lamented the poor compensation and low status that drove many skilled practitioners from the field.

Beloved by her students, Dr. Almy continued to mentor graduates long after they had completed studying under her tutelage. Following her retirement, she continued to conduct research across the world, including as a Fulbright Fellow in New South Wales. She also served as a Visiting Professor at Mills College in Oakland, and as a docent at the Oakland Museum. *See also* Curriculum, Science.

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Marcy Whitebook

American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS)

American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS) is an organization that provides national visibility and voice for associate early childhood degree programs, faculty, and students. ACCESS began in 1989 as a network of faculty who met at the annual conference of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**. Today, ACCESS is a national, nonprofit 501(c) (3) membership association with members in the majority of states, a handful of state affiliates, a presence at national early childhood and higher education conferences, and membership resources offered primarily through its Web site.

ACCESS members include full-time and adjunct faculty with early childhood assignments at associate degree programs, campus children's center faculty, and other individuals who share an interest in early childhood teacher career development and education. The organization offers professional support through its Web site, presentations at national and state conferences, and member networks and state affiliates.

The organization's purpose is to support and advocate for strong associate degree programs that provide professional development to those who teach and care for young children from birth through age 8 across a variety of settings—public elementary schools, Head Start programs, child-care centers and homes, and other community early childhood programs. Advocacy for associate to baccalaureate articulate agreements and for a national associate degree accreditation system have been at the center of the organization's work since its founding.

ACCESS national board members worked with NAEYC to develop national standards for associate degree programs in 1992 and again in 2002. ACCESS endorsed both sets of standards. ACCESS participated in a feasibility study workgroup and

in the Advisory Council, supporting NAEYC's initiative to develop a national early childhood associate degree accreditation system.

National and state ACCESS efforts focus on supporting innovative, high-quality practices in early childhood teacher education; offering expertise regarding the role of associate degree programs in the early childhood teacher education system; and advocating for policies and systems that strengthen professional qualifications while increasing diversity in our nation's early childhood teachers.

Further Readings: American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS): Available online at www.accesscece.org.

Alison Lutton

Antibias/Multicultural Education

The United States is a nation of many peoples: many races, cultures, religions, classes, lifestyles, and histories. It is also a nation where access to the “inalienable right” to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” has not been equal for all. The white, male European immigrants to the New World established institutions and laws that advantaged them while disadvantaging many other groups based on race, gender, and class. Since the founding of the United States, people have worked to make real the goals of a democratic, free republic that originally served only one part of the society. The increasing cultural diversity and accompanying racism, discrimination, and **poverty** create particular challenges for early childhood educators who wish to honor the professional mandate to foster every child's full potential and to prepare all children to function effectively as members of a democratic society.

Antibias and multicultural education has been a significant force for addressing these challenges and has profoundly influenced early childhood **curriculum** and practice. The hybrid term of “antibias/multicultural education” (Ab/Mc) reflects the roots and evolution of the multicultural movement as expressed in the antibias curriculum created for young children.

Multicultural Education

The multicultural education movement grew out of the Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty. It first emerged during the 1970s, spearheaded by several African American scholars, notably James Banks, Geneva Gay, and Carl Grant (e.g., Banks, 1996). Its philosophical roots reflect the work of early African American scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter Woodson, which exposed the myths of equality that prevailed in the White version of the history of the United States. It also had roots in the intergroup education movement of the late 1940s and early 1950s, when some of the classic studies of young children's racial awareness and attitudes toward self and others were conducted.

The original objectives of multicultural education included sensitizing all individuals to ethnic and racial differences, increasing individual awareness of cultural traditions and experiences, helping all individuals value their own race and **culture** as worthy of existing on an equal basis with mainstream American values and

experiences, and ensuring that all children have access to high quality education. Multicultural education challenged existing education approaches to diversity, which denied the validity of cultures other than the dominant European-American one.

Multicultural education advocated an approach of “cultural pluralism” and supports the right of every group to maintain their unique cultures while also equally participating in and enhancing the whole society. Cultural pluralism offered an alternative to the “melting pot” ideology, which had claimed that all people would be amalgamated into a new breed of American, but, in truth, meant that immigrants were expected to assimilate completely into the dominant European American society created by the “founding fathers.” Cultural pluralism also undermined the ideology of “color blindness,” which challenged white superiority but, at the same time, denied the cultural orientations of many groups and their experiences of racism. Early multicultural education was often described as the “salad” approach in which children could maintain and develop their own cultural values, traditions, languages, and lifestyles while also learning to be equal participants in the larger society.

During the 1980s, a wide range of multicultural practices emerged. Sleeter and Grant (1988) organized the different approaches and the political messages they embody into a typology of multicultural education. They articulated the following categories: (1) *education of culturally different children*, adapting programs for specific racial and cultural groups to encourage academic achievement and assimilation into the mainstream; (2) *single group studies*, formerly called “ethnic studies,” focused on the literature, art, history, culture of specific ethnic groups; (3) *human relations*, enhancing positive intergroup relationships and reducing prejudice; (4) *multicultural education*, emphasizing the positive, adaptive value of cultural pluralism and encouraging children to be competent in more than one cultural system; and (5) *education that is multicultural and reconstructionist*—promoting profound social, economic, political, and educational changes to foster equal relationships among all groups. The antibias curriculum approach (Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force, 1989) is an application of the social reconstructionist approach to early childhood education.

In the 1990s, the scope of multicultural education broadened from the original focus on race and culture to more closely align with the early childhood antibias approach. Multicultural theorists began to implicitly or explicitly include a focus on social class and economic discrimination. The feminist movement influenced multicultural theorists to include gender as a dimension of inequity that cut across race, culture, and class. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Educational Act in 1990 led to increasing numbers of children with disabilities being “included” in regular classrooms, and disability issues were woven into multicultural curricula. More recently, wider recognition of the hate crimes targeting gay men and lesbian women has led to sexual orientation becoming a theme in multicultural education, an addition that has caused controversy both within and outside the field. In addition, the ethnic groups included as part of multicultural work has broadened to reflect the increasing number of such groups as Mexican and Central Americans and Asian/Pacific Americans living in the United States. Moreover, increased hate crimes and discrimination targeting Arab Americans

and Muslims after the September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center has called on multicultural educators to include these issues as well. Some writers (e.g., Ramsey, 2005) have further expanded the definition of multiculturalism to incorporate the ecological justice movement because environmental degradation (e.g., the concentration of highly polluting factories and destructive agricultural practices) has a disproportionate effect on poor communities and countries of color. They have also incorporated discussions about how hyper-consumerism (e.g., the media-inspired competition to purchase the latest clothes and cars) exacerbates the disparities between economic groups and undermines interpersonal and intergroup relationships

The Antibias Approach

The 1989 publication of *Antibias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** introduced the concept of antibias education to the field of early childhood care and education. It stated that antibias education is “an active/activist approach to challenging prejudice, stereotyping, bias and systemic “isms,” grounded in the premise that it is necessary for each individual to actively intervene, to challenge and counter the personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate oppression” (Derman-Sparks and ABC Task Force, 1989, p. 3). As outlined by the authors, the goals of antibias curriculum are to: (1) nurture each child’s construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-concept and group identity; (2) promote each child’s comfortable, empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds; (3) foster each child’s critical thinking about bias; and (4) cultivate each child’s ability to stand up for her/himself and for others in the face of bias. These goals are reflected in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) **accreditation** standards. However, the specific tasks and strategies for working toward these goals depend on children’s backgrounds, ages, and life experiences.

Motivation for developing the antibias approach arose in the 1980s from dissatisfaction with the prevailing practice in early childhood education of “additive” or “tourist” multicultural education. In this simplistic form of the multicultural approach, curriculum “visits” cultural groups other than the mainstream, white, middle-class culture from time to time, while the content and teaching styles of the “regular” curriculum continues to reflect only the dominant culture. Classroom activities focus on special times, such as a holiday celebration, or an occasional “multicultural” event or unit. Materials used during these special multicultural “excursions” from the regular curriculum are frequently inaccurate, set in the past rather than present, focus on countries of origin rather than the current experience of various immigrant groups, and are presented from the perspective of the dominant culture. Consequently, even with good intentions, a “tourist” multicultural approach results in exposing children to inaccurate information, has little relationship to the children’s lives, and sends the message that the dominant culture is normative (Derman-Sparks and ABC Task Force, 1989).

Three core concepts underlie the antibias educational approach. First, it is impossible to teach about diversity without paying attention to the societal systemic power dynamics that assign advantage or disadvantage based on race, gender,

class, physical ability, and sexual orientation. These dynamics influence children's developing ideas and feelings about themselves and others and affect every educator's sense of practice with children and families. Second, research about young children's identity and attitudes should inform curriculum. Third, antibias education should utilize principles of constructivist theory and an activity-based pedagogy, which treats learners as active participants in their own learning and requires teachers to scaffold learning experiences to mesh with children's ideas and stages of development. Constructivist classrooms engage children in interactive activities that support active learning about their daily life experiences.

In the years since the antibias approach was introduced, teacher experience has deepened, extended and fine-tuned its conceptual and pedagogical frameworks. Several subsequent books reflected this growth. (e.g., Bisson, 1997; Pelo and Davidson, 2000). In addition, educators in several other countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Japan, South Africa, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom) are also building theory and practice as they explore what antibias education work looks like in the context of their particular history, population demographics, and cultures (see Van Keulen, 2004).

Current Themes of Antibias/Multicultural Work

Antibias/multicultural (Ab/Mc) education work continues to develop its theory and practice. One theme is the inclusion of more aspects of diversity, as previously discussed in the section about the history of multicultural education. A second theme is the explicit incorporation of critical pedagogy, which has profoundly transformed the scope and methodology of Ab/Mc work (Nieto, 2004). Critical pedagogy emphasizes that teaching and learning occur in specific historic, cultural, and social contexts and power dynamics; and promotes children's capacity to engage in critical thinking about their lives and society. It includes the following goals: to (a) affirm students' cultures without trivializing them; (b) challenge hegemonic knowledge (i.e., the knowledge that is constructed by the dominant group that assumes that they know how the world works for all people); (c) complicate pedagogy so that there is not only one right way to teach; (d) challenge the simplistic focus of tolerance forms of multicultural education on self-esteem as the operative factor in breaking bonds of oppression; and (e) encourage "dangerous discourses" that name and challenge inequities.

A third theme in antibias/multicultural education is a push to critically examine the identities and socialization of white people and to more explicitly develop curriculum that addresses these dynamics for children and adults (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey, 2006; Sleeter, 2001; Tatum, 1997).

A fourth theme is the promotion of teacher reflections on how their own cultural and economic backgrounds and the societal structures of power and advantage influence teaching beliefs, styles, and interactions. Accordingly, effective teacher pre- and in-service training uses a critical pedagogy approach that engages adult learners in experiential and peer learning and in a *process* of change (Derman-Sparks and Phillips, 1997). It also promotes teachers' openness to unfamiliar views and experiences, their ability to challenge one's own assumptions, and a passion for social and economic and political justice (Ramsey, 2005).

A fifth theme, based on the experience of several decades, is reflected in the understanding that effective antibias/multicultural education requires more than individual efforts within centers and classrooms. It involves community-building and local and national organizing for institutional and political changes that are grounded in a vision of a new society that includes all people equitably. It is centered on the complexities and conflicts inherent in all people's experiences, with a primary goal of liberating people from oppression by challenging the societal, economic, and political structures that maintain these inequities.

Antibias/Multicultural Education in Practice

Diversity, oppression, and social justice may seem to be a world away from young children. However, children are constantly absorbing information about power, privilege, and stereotypes in their families, schools, and communities and from the media. The challenge for early childhood educators is to find meaningful and hopeful ways to nurture young children's positive identity, cross-cultural respect and skills, and capacity to recognize and challenge prejudice and discrimination.

Ab/Mc education is not a set curriculum but rather a framework of goals, principles and strategies. How it is practiced depends largely on the setting: the population of the community and school; the backgrounds and experiences of the teachers and parents; and the specific children in a particular classroom. For example, in a community that has suffered long-term discrimination, the emphasis might be on fostering positive identities and self-worth, while encouraging children and families to play more assertive roles in the community and larger world. In contrast, children who are racially and economically privileged may need to see their own lives in a broader and more critical perspective and to challenge their sense of superiority and learn how to listen to others rather than always express their own views. Therefore, teachers need to be able to work closely with families and know how to gather information about children's communities.

Ab/Mc perspectives and themes can be woven into all curricular themes and teaching practices. The following examples are a few of the many possibilities. The specific themes generated in a classroom should reflect the interests of specific children, families, and teachers. For example, the theme of "family" can embrace all aspects of physical, cultural, economic, and gender differences, as well as the diversity of family composition. The themes of "community" and "work" should incorporate blue and pink-collar workers, artists, and community activists as well as professional jobs. Stereotypes of people with disabilities and women and men should be challenged by showing them in a wide range of activities. Activities such as roleplaying (e.g., shopping) can be constructed to draw children's attention to inequities in the outside world.

In such classrooms, art materials include the range of human skin colors in paint, crayons, paper and play dough and are available to children at all times. The aesthetic environment includes art from all the children's home and community cultures. Music and movement activities expand children's ideas about how different people make and move to music and show how music and dance are ways to express resistance to injustice (e.g., protest songs). Dramatic play props

reflect all the children's family culture as well as those in the children's larger community. Photos and posters illustrate diversity of people, families and home environments. Teachers pay attention to issues of power and bias that emerge during children's play and use these as teachable moments.

Discussions about classroom rules and conflict solving provide opportunities to reflect on how people see the world differently and how they need to find commonalities and compromises to live together. Children's comments and questions about the many aspects of diversity as well as incidents of discomfort or bias provide valuable "teachable moments" upon which to build learning activities.

In sum, contemporary multicultural/antibias educators have identified the following goals to help children navigate the contradictions and challenge the inequities of contemporary society in the twenty-first and subsequent centuries:

- Develop strong identities—as individuals, as members of communities, of a country and as living beings on this planet.
- Develop a sense of solidarity with all people and the natural world.
- Become critical thinkers.
- Become confident and persistent problem solvers so that they see themselves as activists rather than simply feeling overwhelmed by the challenges of the world.
- Ensure that *all* children gain the academic skills that will give them access to the knowledge of our society, the power to make a difference and hope for their future.

Educators and families must push for excellent schools in all communities, especially those with high rates of poverty, and help all children understand that academic skills are a source of power that can be acquired without giving up their identities and critical awareness of the world. To these ends, many early childhood professional and leaders (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children) argue that antibias/multicultural and **bilingual education** are essential to quality education.

Controversies and Challenges

As well as being accepted as a part of the early childhood education canon and having many advocates and practitioners, antibias/multicultural education has also become a source of controversy and target of criticism from both the left and the right. Advocates themselves have disagreed on its parameters and priorities. Some argue that the original focus on race, ethnicity, and culture should remain primary, because adding other aspects of identity and oppression dilutes the work on racism, which they consider the most intransigent oppression in our society. Others insist that expanding the focus strengthens the work because it enables people to understand the core dynamics and intersections between the various forms of systemic and interpersonal oppression, and creates the possibility of collaboration among larger numbers of people. Criticism also comes from people who believe that Ab/Mc work is less relevant to children of color than to white children. Some argue that children of color need to focus on their own identity and group's issues, while others think it is essential to make Ab/Mc education relevant to a range of cultural communities. Some critics from a more progressive stance argue that multiculturalism obscures the real underlying causes of inequality, thus undermining rather than advancing social and economic change.

The most vehement political opposition has come from conservative groups who have targeted both the work and some of its leaders. Opposition includes the argument that Ab/Mc education's focus on cultural pluralism is divisive to the nation, and that education should keep its focus on assimilating everyone into one national culture. Another argument claims that Ab/Mc education distracts from, rather than enhances, academic learning. A third insists that the topics of Ab/Mc education belong only within the family. Some critics highlight the inclusion of rights for gays and lesbian people as evidence that Ab/Mc education is anti-Christian or anti-American. Antibias/multicultural educators argue that this backlash is best understood in the context of wider social conservatism directed against people of color, gays, lesbians and transgender people, immigrants of color and people on welfare. It reflects the tension between those who want to press forward toward creating a more open and equitable society and those who insist on maintaining the old lines of racial, cultural, gender, and class power. This conservative backlash is an indication that the dialogue must be expanded to include people who feel threatened by educational reforms.

In addition to resistance from various quarters, several obstacles within the educational system can derail the full implementation of antibias/multicultural education. Teachers often do not have the time to fully study current social, economic, and political issues and to develop related curricula. They may also lack the confidence and skills to tackle potentially contentious or controversial issues. Administrators may pressure teachers to adhere to the standard curriculum to ensure that children pass mandated tests. Community members and parents may resist the implementation of Ab/Mc education as too radical and contrary to traditional values or as a frivolous distraction from academic curriculum. Despite the many existing resources and evidence that it can be woven into all curricula, Ab/Mc education is still all too often relegated to occasional "add-on," "tourist" activities or simply dismissed all together.

Another impediment to the implementation of Ab/Mc education is the lack of substantial research related to it. Very little empirical information exists about the extent to which teachers' curricula and practices actually reflect multicultural perspectives. Moreover, aside from anecdotal data from teacher observations and documentation (e.g., Pelo and Davidson, 2000; Whitney, 1999), little information is available about how children respond to Ab/Mc activities and whether or not these efforts have any lasting effects on children's ideas about the world. There are many challenges specific to carrying out this research, including designing longitudinal research that enables reliable measures of the effects of Ab/Mc work on children's development, including cognitive changes and relationships with family and peers, within the context of diverse family and community settings. This lack of research is not unique to early childhood settings; overall there has been very little research on the implementation and effects of multicultural education at all levels. However, this type of research is needed to continue to develop the field and to demonstrate to skeptics that it is a worthwhile endeavor. *See also* Constructivism; Disabilities, Young Children with; Feminism in Early Childhood Education; Gay or Lesbian Parents, Children with; Pedagogy, Activity-Based/Experiential; Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education.

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Louise Derman-Sparks and Patricia G. Ramsey

Art. See Assessment, Visual Art; Child Art

Ashton-Warner, Sylvia (1908–1984)

New Zealand's Sylvia Ashton-Warner exemplified the reflective teacher, studying the response of the children in her classroom to her work, and modifying it in turn so that their learning would be optimum. Ashton-Warner wrote eleven books (1959–1979). In the most important of them, *Teacher*, she tells of her struggle to teach beginning reading to very young Maori children, who found the books and lessons used with white children incomprehensible and boring.

Her methods strongly influenced many other teachers who found themselves in cross-cultural settings and who wished to avoid "colonizing" the children. She worked during a time when reading primers still depicted only white, middle-class children. Children of color had little to identify with and little incentive to learn from the sterile text or European urban illustrations of the available primers. Ashton-Warner's passionate writing and her ability to portray classrooms in a way that made them come alive on the page earned her a worldwide audience. Her books have been translated into more than 17 languages.

Social critic Paul Goodman wrote about Ashton-Warner:

Consider . . . the method employed by Sylvia Ashton-Warner in teaching little Maoris. She gets them to ask for their own words, the particular gut-word of fear, lust, or despair that is obsessing the child that day; this is written for him on strong cardboard; he learns it instantaneously and never forgets it; and soon he has an exciting, if odd, vocabulary. From the beginning, writing is by demand, practical, magical; and of

course it is simply an extension of speech—it is the best and strongest speech, as writing should be. What is read is what somebody is importantly trying to tell. (p. 26)

Ashton-Warner was motivated by the artist's urge to express strong feelings, and saw the same urge in the children. That observation led her to develop her reflective instructional method. She also orchestrated the school day so it would alternate between expressive activities chosen by the children and activities in which the teacher imparted new information. She called this alternation "breathing in and out." Ashton-Warner also wrote about the relationship of early education to world peace, believing that if children have peaceful means of expression they will not be aggressive or violent.

Ashton-Warner was unable to reconcile her artistic life with her family life. Her drawing, painting of watercolors, and playing piano could not directly be reconciled with her life as a wife and a mother. She and her husband, Keith Henderson, worked out an unusual domestic arrangement. She created in her twenties, and re-created in each place she lived afterwards, a separate writing space she called "Selah" (a place of rest). Although it scandalized the neighbors, her husband, Keith, was the main child-care provider for the family.

She was more honored in the United States, and in other countries, than in her own New Zealand. Despite her receipt of the New Zealand Book Award in 1979 for her autobiography, *I Passed This Way*, she had felt neglected by her country for most of her life. Many in New Zealand education still speak of her as if she was not special. In the rest of the world, her influence is felt, although usually not in the mainstream. Her work was implemented in early **Head Start** programs (notably **Child Development Mississippi**) and in many of the alternative schools of the 1960s in the United States. Teachers in scattered classrooms around the world continue to use her methods to introduce young children to reading. Ashton-Warner has influenced the work of Vivian Gussin Paley, Karen Gallas, Cynthia Ballenger, and others, as well as the activities of the centers for young children in **Reggio Emilia**.

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Assessment in Early Childhood

Assessment in early childhood typically refers to the measurement of a child's developmental status, whether at a given point in time or at multiple points to track change over time. Although an assessment can be narrowly targeted at achievement in specific areas (such as mathematics or reading/literacy), early childhood professionals are urging a wider perspective. For example, assessment has been recently defined as "the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting what children do and how they do it as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child . . . [and] involves the multiple steps of collecting data on a child's development and learning, determining its significance in light of the program goals and objectives, incorporating the information into planning for individuals and programs, and communicating the findings to families and other involved people" (NAEYC, 2003). In general, evaluation is a term referring to a broader enterprise of which assessments are a component. Evaluations often include multiple assessments over time, in the context of other sources, such as the quality of program implementation, staff qualifications, and participant demographics.

Purposes of Assessment

Assessments of young children generally have two primary purposes: first, to serve as yardsticks to measure the ways individual children are developing and second, to determine whether early childhood programs are effectively supporting children's development and learning in the aggregate. The **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) considers assessment integral to planning curriculum and instruction for individuals and groups, communicating with families, identifying children who need services or intervention, and improving program practice (NAEYC, 2003). Parents and caregivers want to know whether a child in their care demonstrates particular strengths, is performing within normative ranges, or shows lags that signal a need for intervention. Developmental assessment refers most often to screening processes intended to identify the need for specialized services or intervention. Meisels and Atkins-Burnett (2000) define screening as "a brief assessment procedure designed to identify children who, because they might have a learning problem or disability, should receive more extensive assessment." Screening tools often focus on visual-motor abilities, language-communicative competence, and gross motor abilities. Other types of screening include hearing and vision, health, and physical development, which could also affect a child's educational needs and experiences (Gullo, 2005).

Early childhood programs develop theories of change and set goals with the expectation that particular practices will lead to expected learning outcomes for participants; assessment provides information that can demonstrate progress toward those goals. It is often beneficial to conduct assessments at multiple time points geared to age or program entry or exit to provide information for purposes ranging from planning individualized instructional approaches to rating the quality of instructional practice. Any intervention that attempts to change behavior or improve learning ideally seeks to assess change at many levels: management and

supervision, classroom environment, professional development, as well as child knowledge and skills.

Concerns about Inappropriate Assessment in Early Childhood

Accountability and assessment are closely linked concepts that undergird public policy decisions. With the **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001, the federal government mandated annual testing of reading and math beginning in grade three and sanctions for schools that do not improve student performance. Many states have adopted early learning standards that extend benchmarks for elementary grades downward into preschool. In addition, federal programs such as **Head Start** have implemented testing requirements in the year prior to kindergarten entry on a limited set of early language, literacy, and numeracy indicators. Much debate continues about the constructs, domains, and indicators for young children's learning and development that should be assessed, and the best means of measuring performance on these indicators. Standards, and the tests to measure progress in achieving them, are often externally imposed for accountability purposes, rather than derived from appropriate developmental expectations. The formats of early childhood assessment are crucial because if implemented out of context, using a single source or method, testing instruments can yield unrepresentative or inaccurate results. Early childhood organizations are concerned that excessive emphasis on assessment could result in inappropriate changes to early childhood environments if, for example, teachers were to focus children's learning activities on specific items of a test rather than provide a range of classroom experiences related to the broad developmental constructs being assessed. An additional concern would be a program-wide reallocation of resources devoted to educational materials and facilities, professional development, and support for teachers based on a narrow conception of what is being assessed (NAEYC, 2003).

What Constitutes High-Quality Assessment?

The value of any assessment hinges on the quality of the information collected. Assessments of young children are inherently difficult to do well, and the importance of obtaining good information is directly related to the way that information will be used. The higher the stakes of the assessment (i.e., the more far-reaching the decisions made based on the results of the assessment), the more stringent the quality of the process should be. In response to increased emphasis on assessment in early childhood programs, NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) released a statement supporting assessments that are "developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, tied to children's daily activities, supported by professional development, inclusive of families, and connected to specific, beneficial purposes." In general, high-quality assessments (1) include information from multiple sources on multiple dimensions, (2) are administered by highly qualified assessors, (3) are reliable, and (4) are valid. These standards apply equally to observational, contextual assessments, and to more direct, test-like assessments of young children.

Assessments that include multiple domains, modes, and perspectives are particularly important for young children. Child-specific indicators based on a comprehensive view of what the child knows and can do were developed by the National Education Goals Panel (Kagan, Moore, and Bredekamp, 1995; Love, 2003; Love, Aber, and Brooks-Gunn, 1994) and have been adopted by Head Start and other early childhood programs. Domains include physical and motor development, social and emotional development, language usage, cognition and general knowledge, and approaches toward learning. Assessments should capture the breadth of children's development, including all five domains. Further, assessment through multiple modes is desirable to more accurately represent a child's development and abilities. Modes of assessment include direct assessment (typically what is referred to as "testing"), parent or teacher ratings, observations, and self-report. Multiple perspectives (e.g., teacher and parent ratings) provide information about the child in different settings. The information from these multiple modes and multiple reporters can be combined to form a more complete picture of an individual child's strengths and needs; in the aggregate, they can provide information on program performance in these areas.

Comprehensive alternative assessments are based on collection of information through a wider range of sources, such as portfolios and anecdotal records. One example of a standards-based approach is the Work Sampling System (Gullo, 2005; Meisels et al., 2001), which features developmental guidelines and checklists in seven learning domains (personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development and health). Teachers rate children on the checklists, select the contents of a portfolio to document each child's learning in the context of the curriculum, and complete a summary report on children's progress three times a year using specific criteria.

As a measure of growth or progress, assessment can be criterion- or normatively referenced. Criterion referenced assessments are those in which performance is judged in terms of mastery of items within given content areas (e.g., reading level). Normatively referenced assessments are those in which performance is judged relative to that of others within the same age group on the same instrument. For all assessments, but in particular for assessing young children, the training and competency of the assessor are critical. Assessors must be able to work effectively with young children in order to measure their performance accurately. Assessors should demonstrate extensive experience with young children as well as thorough training in the proper administration of the assessment tool. It is usually advisable to monitor assessors' performance to ensure their fidelity to the administration procedures of each assessment instrument.

When selecting the individual components of an assessment, it is important that each is reliable and valid for the areas to be measured, and for the children to be assessed. Reliability refers to the ability of an assessment instrument or procedure to produce the same results if administered to the same child within a reasonable timeframe (test-retest reliability), and in the case of ratings, if completed by a different person for the same child (interrater reliability). Reliability of assessments of young children may be lower as a result of numerous factors including uneven development, behavioral fluctuation, situational variables, and prior experience

with testing/assessment, all of which may affect the results in ways that have little to do with the child's competence in the domain being measured.

Validity refers to the extent to which the assessment captures what it purports to measure. A perfectly reliable but invalid assessment is useless. Similarly when working with different populations, it is important to know whether the assessment has been used with specific groups and found to be valid for all of them. There are many kinds of validity, including face validity (the extent to which the assessment items appear to measure what they purport to measure), concurrent validity (children perform similarly on different measures of the same domain), and predictive validity (children's performance on the assessment predicts later performance, usually in school). The utility of assessment in early childhood often hinges on the expectation that performance on the assessment predicts the children's later performance. Assessment should be followed by specific planning to address areas of need and to maintain areas of strength. It is hoped that assessment is the first step in a process to remedy problems and improve later performance.

Conclusion

All early childhood assessments should take into account the family, care settings, and cultural contexts in which the child is developing. Optimally, assessment should be carried out within such contexts, but key adults must be informed about and involved in any decision making that results from assessments. Given the lack of consensus about goals and methods of assessment in early childhood, experts have concluded that the field should be considered emergent. The National Research Council has called for a broad program of research and development to advance the state of the art in assessment in the areas of (1) classroom-based assessment to support learning, (2) assessment for diagnostic purposes, and (3) assessment of program quality for accountability and public policy (Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, 2000). *See also* Families; Standards.

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Cheri A. Vogel, Louisa Banks Tarullo, and John M. Love

Assessment, Visual Art

Teachers of young children assess visual art in a variety of ways, and for a range of purposes. For teachers in public schools, part of art assessment means ensuring that classrooms for young children are in compliance with frameworks and standards prescribed by the state. In addition, most teachers collect samples of children's artwork to include in child portfolios. Finally, the inspiring work of **Reggio Emilia** has encouraged teachers to use diverse **documentation** of children's artwork and the artistic process in order to make learning visible to children, parents, and the larger community.

Standards and Frameworks

A recent push toward increased accountability in schools has led to the development of a complex set of national and state learning standards for many subject domains. Currently, both national and state-specific standards exist for the arts. An example of one state standard for the visual arts drawn from Massachusetts is shown below:

PreK–12 STANDARD 1: Methods, Materials, and Techniques

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the methods, materials, and techniques unique to the visual arts.

GRADE LEVEL	LEARNING STANDARDS
By the end of grade 4	<p>Students will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Use a variety of materials and media, <i>for example, crayons, chalk, paint, clay, various kinds of papers, textiles, and yarns</i>, and understand how to use them to produce different visual effects 1.2 Create artwork in a variety of two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D) media, <i>for example: 2D – drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, weaving; 3D – plastic (malleable) materials such as clay and paper, wood, or found objects for assemblage and construction</i> 1.3 Learn and use appropriate vocabulary related to methods, materials, and techniques 1.4 Learn to take care of materials and tools and to use them safely

As a result of this increased push for academic accountability and increase standardized testing even of young children, many perceive that the arts are receiving

less attention than more “academic” subjects such as literacy and science. A current trend in art curriculum is tied to these realities: educators such as Carol Seefeldt advocate integrating the arts across domains, thereby including artistic learning and development alongside literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies curriculum. Many teachers are embracing this idea, which is also supported by Gardner’s theory of **multiple intelligences** and ideas from the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Each of these sources acknowledges that children learn in different ways and possess different “languages” for communicating and understanding the world. Integrating the arts allows all children a chance to make sense of and communicate their understandings about other topics through artistic means.

Portfolios

Classroom teachers often compile portfolios of children’s work throughout the year to assess their artistic development. Although children like to take work home to show parents, teachers may retain work that represents a shift in the child’s use of materials or thinking, to look at development in terms of what concepts, materials, and forms appear in the child’s artwork. In some instances, the children themselves may self-evaluate, choosing what work should be included in the portfolio. The teacher and the child may look at the portfolio together at different points throughout the year. This also helps children become objective and evaluate their own work, and gives them a new perspective on the work they are currently doing in the classroom. By continually taking notes of what children say about their work, and using these comments as points of departure for discussion about work, teachers can assess what is important to each child about the artwork he/she is producing. For the teacher, knowing what engages the children is helpful in planning future lessons, considering what new materials to introduce, and offering meaningful experiences in which to practice skills.

Documentation

In addition to taking anecdotes, teachers will also take photos, sound recordings, and even videotape classroom activity to assess learning. These photos, transcriptions of conversations, and anecdotes are displayed in the classroom or school by the teacher alongside children’s artwork. Documentation includes text articulating what the work might have meant to the teacher and the child. This form of assessment serves as another point of reflection and evaluation for the teacher. Teachers may use documentation to start dialogue with the children, parents, or other faculty. Documentation and conversations that emerge from documentation help teachers as they plan future lessons for children.

Conclusions

Assessing children’s artistic work serves multiple purposes. By collecting, displaying, and examining pieces of children’s art, teachers may better understand artistic and representational strengths of the children they teach. Observing and documenting the process of creating art can inform teachers about children’s fine

motor abilities, as well as provide insight about the ways in which children make decisions and plan during artistic experiences. *See also* Child Art.

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Megina Baker and Maggie Beneke

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)

The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) is a not-for-profit professional organization of educators, parents, and other caregivers interested in promoting the highest quality educational practices. More specifically, its mission, as presented on the ACEI Web site, is “to promote and support in the global community the optimal education and development of children, from birth through early adolescence, and to influence the professional growth of educators and the efforts of others who are committed to the needs of children in a changing society.”

ACEI was founded in 1892 by a group of kindergarten teachers who wished to expand the pioneering work with young children begun by Friedrich **Frobel** in Germany during the 1820s and 1830s. Since that time, the organization’s goals (as defined in its constitution) have expanded to include the following:

- The promotion of the inherent rights, education, and well-being of all children in the home, school, and community.
- The promotion of desirable conditions, programs, and practices for children from infancy through early adolescence.
- The raising of the standard of preparation for teachers and others who are involved with the care and development of children.
- The encouragement of continuous professional growth of educators.
- The promotion of active cooperation among all individuals and groups concerned with children.
- Informing the public of the needs of children and the ways in which various programs must be adjusted to fit those needs and rights.

To achieve its goals, ACEI has a membership of nearly 10,000 professionals throughout the United States and sixty other countries. The organization hosts an annual conference that features national and international presenters who focus on a broad range of topics of interest to educators worldwide. The organization also plans a world conference outside the United States every three years. Further, the voice of ACEI is shared with the world through its award-winning journals, such as *Childhood Education* and the *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*. In addition to its prestigious journals, ACEI has an extensive publication program that includes: Focus Newsletters, position papers on contemporary problems and issues, “ACEI Speaks” pamphlets that provide concise information on topics of general concern, and a host of books and resources. The association’s goals are also supported through its active liaison with various

government agencies, such as the United Nations, the National Commission for the Rights of Children, and the Alliance for Curriculum Reform. Finally, to achieve its mission of providing children with high-quality education, ACEI serves as the lead organization responsible for accreditation of teacher education programs through the **National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education** (NCATE).

The association actively seeks volunteers for its many committees, which provide direction to the organization. Committees include Awards, Conference, Diversity, Heritage, Infancy/Early Childhood, Intermediate/Middle Childhood, International/Intercultural, Membership, Nominating, Professional Standards/Teacher Education, Program Development, Public Affairs, Publications, Research, Retired Members, Student, Technology, and Week of the Classroom Teacher.

For additional information, view the organization's Web site at www.acei.org or contact ACEI directly at the following address:

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Jim Hoot

Association for Constructivist Teaching (ACT)

The Association for Constructivist Teaching (ACT) is a professional educational organization dedicated to fostering teacher development based on constructivist learning theory.

Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning, describing both what knowledge is, and how it evolves. Initially based on the work of Jean **Piaget** and Lev **Vygotsky** in cognitive psychology, it was extended to the fields of philosophy and education by von Glasersfeld, Duckworth, Forman, Kamii, and Fosnot (among many others). It currently draws further support from complexity theories in science, that is, physics and biology (Prigogine, Maturana, Varela, and Kauffman). The theory describes knowledge not as truths to be transmitted or discovered, but as emergent, developmental, nonobjective, viable constructed explanations as humans engage in meaning-making in cultural and social communities of discourse. Learning from this perspective is viewed as a self-regulatory, organizing, evolutionary process by humans in dynamic "far-from-equilibrium" states as they struggle with the conflict between existing personal models of the world and discrepant new insights. As humans act on and attempt to interpret their surround (assimilation), they construct new representations and models of reality (accommodation) with culturally developed tools and symbols, and further negotiate such meaning through cooperative social activity, discourse, and debate in communities of practice. Although constructivism is not a theory of teaching, it suggests taking a radically different approach to instruction from that used historically in most schools. Teachers who base their practice on constructivism reject the notions that meaning can be passed on to learners via symbols and transmission, that learners can incorporate exact copies of teachers' understanding for their own use, that whole concepts can be broken into discrete sub-skills, and that concepts can be taught out of context. In contrast, a constructivist

view of learning suggests a developmentally appropriate, student-centered, active workshop approach to teaching that gives learners the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience through which they can search for patterns, raise questions, and model, interpret, and defend their strategies and ideas. The classroom in this model is seen almost as a mini society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse, interpretation, justification, and reflection. The traditional hierarchy of teacher as the autocratic knower, and learner as the unknowing, controlled subject studying and practicing what the teacher knows, dissipates as teachers assume more of a facilitator's role and learners take on more ownership of the ideas. Autonomy, mutual reciprocity of social relations, and empowerment become the goals.

The ACT was the natural evolution of the Annual New England Piaget Conference, a small annual conference for teachers held every fall at the Park School in Norwalk, Connecticut. The school was established and directed by Rose Park, an educator interested in applications of Piagetian theory to educational practice. In the late 1980s, the Association for Constructivist Teaching incorporated as a nonprofit and Catherine Fosnot was elected as the first president. Some of the early board members were Barry Wadsworth, George Forman, Lloyd Jaeger, and Calvert Schlick. Annual conferences were held around the New England area. Since 1990, the organization has had more of a national presence, and the annual conferences are rotated around the country.

The mission of ACT is to enhance the growth of all educators and students through identification and dissemination of effective constructivist practices in both the professional cultures of teachers and the learning environments of their students. ACT membership is open to anyone interested in the field of education. Current ACT members are practicing classroom teachers, school administrators, supervisors, consultants, college and university personnel, students, parents, and retired educators. Membership continues to flourish with recent members joining from as far away as Japan and Mexico. The meeting format of the annual conference is usually one that includes two keynote speakers and several sessions of concurrent hour-and-a-half workshops over a two- or three-day period. Presentations include research, curriculum ideas, panel discussions, hands-on workshops, all focused on applying constructivist theory about learning to classroom practice at many levels of education.

In addition to the annual conference, the organization publishes a scholarly journal, *The Constructivist* (now available online), distributes CDs of keynote conference speakers, sponsors an online discussion group, compiles a list of constructivist schools and teacher-education programs. Conference and membership information, ACT board contacts, and news are available on the ACT website at <http://www.odu.edu/act>.

Catherine Twomey Fosnot and Alice Wakefield

Atelier

In French, the word *atelier* is a common term meaning an artist's studio or workshop. Within the field of early childhood education, an "atelier" is understood

as a physical space within a school dedicated to children's exploration and use of many materials, tools, symbolic languages, and forms of representation.

Current understanding of the concept of the "atelier" in schools can be traced to the preschools of the municipality in the city of **Reggio Emilia**, Italy. The first ateliers were established in 1963 in the preschools in Reggio Emilia by Loris **Malaguzzi** and his colleagues. Later, in the 1970s, ateliers were also developed in the city's infant and toddler centers. The presence of the atelier is one of the fundamental aspects that distinguishes the preschools and infant toddler centers in Reggio Emilia from other schools for young children. Closely linked to the concept of atelier within the context of early education is the role of the "atelierista," a teacher with a background in the visual arts, who usually works with small groups of children in the atelier. The atelierista forms a close collaborative relationship with the classroom teachers, as well as supports curriculum development, research, and documentation throughout the entire school.

An essential purpose of the atelier is to offer a variety of high-quality materials to all ages of children and to serve as the central place in the school where many collections of materials are located and used. These collections often include traditional art media, such as paint, drawing, or clay, but also may contain nontraditional materials, such as found objects, recycled items, and such natural materials as stones, shells, leaves, dried flowers, and sticks. The many types of rich and interesting materials in the atelier are used to facilitate children's learning.

The concept of the atelier, as well as learning through materials, is integrated into the entire school. This learning occurs in the physical organization of the space as miniateliers are set up in, or adjacent to, each classroom. The term "miniatelier" refers to a space in the classroom where rich materials are organized for children's daily interactions with symbolic languages. Miniateliers may contain materials similar to the ones in the larger atelier, or they may be adjusted to the particular needs of the children and the teachers in each classroom. The relationship between the atelier and the classroom and the atelierista and the classroom teacher is one of collaboration, exchange, and reciprocity. The atelierista works closely with the classroom teachers to make flexible plans that are carried out over days, weeks, and months, to accomplish agreed upon goals and intentions.

An atelier is very different from the traditional interpretation of an "art class" or "art center" found in many North American early childhood educational programs. The presence of an atelier usually means that the adults believe that children make sense and create understanding of experience through a network of relationships and meaningful interactions with adults, other children, the environment, and materials. In Reggio Emilia, this point of view about children's learning has grown from **social constructivism** and **sociocultural theory**.

Today, educators in the United States who are exploring implications of Reggio Emilia's interpretation of early care and education are finding ways to translate characteristics of the atelier into their own school settings. Educators in the United States interested in the concept of the atelier may or may not have a separate space designated for an atelier, or a teacher who is an atelierista. Still, they are able to incorporate many of these ideas into their schools. For example, some teachers may work these ideas into their own classroom by setting up a miniatelier, giving careful attention to the role of materials in children's projects, documenting their

findings, and then sharing them with parents and other teachers. Inspired by the spirit of the atelier, some traditional art teachers are looking for ways to expand their role by collaborating with the classroom teachers on shared goals and projects.

The atelier also plays an active role in developing and supporting research, documentation, and communication within the school community. Adults use the atelier to support pedagogical research through an ongoing cycle of observation, documentation, and interpretation of children's learning. Because of this, the atelier is the primary location within the school where important tools for documentation, such as written notes, photographs, audiocassette recording, or video, are frequently located. The atelierista often assists the classroom teachers with developing many forms of visual communication to highlight the children's learning, such as display panels, binders and books, slide shows, or video presentations. These types of documents help to inform others, both in and outside of the school community, about the work of the school and children's learning experiences.

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Charles Schwall

Attachment

Attachments are emotional bonds that unite people across time and space. The concept of attachment has its roots in an evolutionary approach to early relationships, and can be seen as a lasting emotional tie between people. Attachments form beginning in infancy, where they contribute to human survival by bringing infants, who are dependent on the care of an adult, and their caregivers together. Behavior on the part of both children (i.e., crying, clinging in infants) and caregivers (protection and comforting) results in physical and emotional closeness. Forming attachments to parents or caregivers is seen as a hallmark of socioemotional development in the first year of life.

Typically an infant develops a primary attachment relationship with an important caregiver, usually the mother, but children also form attachment relationships with other people, notably fathers, extended family members, and other caregivers such as child-care providers. Early childhood educators both support parent-child attachments and form their own attachment relationships with children in their care.

Attachment theory has become one of the major organizing frameworks for understanding social and emotional development. After World War II, the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, concerned with the welfare of European orphans, asked John Bowlby, an eminent British psychiatrist, to review research and clinical work on early relationships. In his comprehensive study of attachment he concluded that a strong relationship with a primary caregiver was essential to

healthy development. Mary Ainsworth then developed the research paradigm, “the Strange Situation,” to examine the attachment between a child and caregiver, and began the process of characterizing variation in the human attachment system. According to Ainsworth’s paradigm, some attachment relationships can be described as “secure” and some as “insecure” (avoidant, resistant, or disorganized). Attachments that are positive and secure provide the basis for trust in self and others, and the confidence to explore and learn new things, knowing that the protection and nurturance of a trusted attachment figure is available if needed. Sometimes, however, infants develop attachments that reflect uncertainty or distrust in the responsiveness of the caregiver.

During the last three decades a large and international body of research on attachment has been conducted. Essential to the concept of attachment is the belief that differences in caregiving yield different attachment patterns. That is, responsive caregiving on the part of the caregiver leads to security on the part of the child. Less responsive, or at the extreme, abusive, care leads to insecure attachments.

Characteristics of attachment relationships are most clearly shown when the child is stressed, since this is when the attachment behavioral system is activated. Some children may seek out a trusted adult for comfort and help when stressed; others may have a difficult time settling in the presence of an attachment figure after an emotional upset; others may not seek out the presence or help of a caregiver when they are stressed. These behaviors say something about the child’s *Internal Working Model of Attachment*, or the expectations the child holds that the caregiver will be available (both physically and emotionally) and sensitively responsive when the child is distressed. According to attachment theory, Internal Working Models develop gradually, through a history of interaction with an attachment figure.

Working models, and attachments, can change over time, but these changes are only likely to result from very significant changes in the caregiving environment. For example, consider a one-year-old who has developed an insecure attachment; her caregiver is severely depressed, thus not either physically or emotionally available to attend promptly, consistently, and sensitively to the infant’s distress. Research shows that if the caregiving environment changes in significant, positive ways, attachments can become more secure. In this example, if the caregiver’s depression was not chronic, and the caregiver became a predictable, sensitive attachment figure, the child might alter the working model toward trust and security.

This example illustrates how attachments are influenced by a caregiver’s behavior and life experience, for example, the caregiver’s current social support and stress, and their own childhood history. In families where the caregiver has experienced insecure attachments in their own childhood, and the current circumstances make it more difficult to care sensitively for an infant (e.g., marital conflict, unstable living conditions, economic stressors, mental health problems), children are more likely to develop insecure attachments.

Attachments are also associated with children’s later development. Longitudinal research has shown that children with secure early attachments are more likely to develop close, positive relationships with other people outside the family,

for example with peers and teachers. Attachments are more closely linked with social and emotional development, such as positive social interaction, emotion regulation, and adaptive self understanding, than to intellectual competence. The studies also show that the current life circumstances of the child and the caregivers' sensitivity also have an impact, not simply early attachments.

Attachments seem to be universal across cultures. What varies across culture and context is the particular ways in which attachments are manifest. Children in different cultures may show different patterns of attachment behaviors, relying more or less on close physical contact, for example. Some may rely more on physical contact versus physical proximity. This may indicate that there is no singular model for forming healthy relationships, since children worldwide form secure relationships with their parents. One criticism of attachment theory is based, in part, on the idea that different cultural goals require different caregiving styles and that indicators of secure attachment represent a Western, middle-class bias. In Western cultures, sensitivity is defined by how accessible and emotionally available the caregiver is to understanding the needs of the child, the promptness and timing of response—especially when the child is stressed, and acceptance of the child. A secure one-year-old is one who uses the attachment figure as a “secure base” for exploration, who is able to use the caregiver to help regulate distress effectively, who shows pleasure in the relationship with the attachment figure. Researchers know less about the formation and expression of attachment in non-Western societies, but it is likely that secure and insecure patterns of attachment are related, in part, to different caregiving styles within a culture.

Another criticism of attachment theory comes from those who view attachment behaviors as reflective of innate **temperament** as much as a result of the child's history of caregiving. Research has shown, however, that children with “difficult” temperaments do not necessarily form insecure attachments, since their caregivers can respond appropriately and sensitively to different temperamental characteristics. Similarly, not all children with “easy” temperaments form secure attachments. While a child's attachments may differ with different attachment figures (e.g., secure with mother, insecure with father), a child's temperament remains the same. Temperament may be more closely linked with variations *within* insecure or secure attachments.

Some people used to believe that children “grow out of” attachments; that by the time they are three, children should be independent from their attachment figures. What we now understand is that attachments are lifelong; they change, and the behaviors that are used to express attachments change with age, but attachments do not disappear. Whereas a one-year-old may use physical contact, a three-year-old may be content with proximity and verbal communication when stressed. Older children and adults also maintain attachments, and sometimes just talking with an attachment figure (even by phone) or thinking about them will help to ease distress.

Attachment theory has had a profound effect on early childhood education. Understanding of attachment is seen as essential to supporting children's social-emotional and overall development. This understanding relates to two specific roles for early childhood educators: supporting the relationships of children with their parents and establishing secure relationships with the children themselves.

When caring for and educating other people's children, early childhood educators join a system of care that involves strong emotional ties. Often the emphasis is almost exclusively on the well-being of the child. But that well-being is directly related to the quality of those primary relationships. In working with children, early childhood educators both observe and affect those relationships. Although their role is not to intervene directly, as might a psychologist or clinical social worker, how educators interact with a child and how they support the parent or primary caregiver should be informed by an understanding of healthy attachment. Given a caution about large variation in what healthy attachment looks like, indicators of such attachment in the infant and preschool years include both child and family characteristics. On the part of the child we may see the child showing preference for the attachment figure, wanting physical closeness or proximity when confronting new or stressful situations, using the attachment figure as secure base for exploration, and showing/sharing objects and experiences with the caregiver. On the part of the family we might see mutual pleasure at reunion after separation, adapting family life to include the child, and securing a protective environment for the child. On the other hand, educators are also in a position to observe attachments that are less secure, for example when interactions show that the child expects the caregiver to interfere in activities or tends not to go to the caregiver when upset. Again, such observations need to be made with great caution both because there is a large degree of variation in how secure relationships are formed and because cross-cultural interaction patterns must be considered. Negative judgments about parent-child relationships often affect teacher-parent interactions. Of course, if there are concerns about **child abuse and neglect**, appropriate referrals should be made. However, healthy attachments are not independent of the social support and resources available to families. Early childhood educators can support healthy relationships when they describe the child in a positive manner, point out how the child uses the parent as a secure base, and, in general, see their role as supportive of the primary relationship.

At the same time, educators also form their own attachment relationships with children in their care. Through responsive caregiving, responding to the unique needs of each child, and supporting the child's exploratory activities through curriculum, educators become attachment figures. As with attachment to family members, there is variation in these attachment patterns with some being secure and others insecure, with responsive caregiving relating to the secure pattern, and with secure relationships yielding positive developmental outcomes for children. Children who experience secure attachment with parents tend to do so with their teachers, but this is not always true, with some children forming secure relationships with teachers when the parent-child relationship is seen to be insecure, and vice versa. Good relationships with child-care providers and teachers can help buffer children from insecure attachments at home, by demonstrating to the child that positive, responsive caregiving relationships are possible.

Children are very capable of, and benefit from, multiple attachment relationships. This is true at home, when there is more than one adult with whom the child forms a strong secure relationship, as well as in alternative care settings. Although feelings of competition among adults who care for the same child are

natural, teachers must balance their own healthy and appropriate emotional responses to caring for children with the goal of supporting the primary relationship between the parent and the child. When both parents and child-care providers see their goal as a partnership that helps children to thrive through secure, healthy relationships at home, day care, and school, it is rewarding for everyone and provides the strongest foundation for children's development. *See also* Development, Emotional.

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M. Ann Easterbrooks and John Hornstein

Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a syndrome characterized by serious and persistent difficulties in one or more of three specific areas: attention span, impulse control, and hyperactivity. ADD/ADHD is a chronic disorder that can begin in infancy and extend through adulthood, having negative effects on a child's life at home, in school, and within the community. ADD/ADHD presents along a spectrum of severity, and can involve attention problems, primarily hyperactivity, or a combination of the two. It is conservatively estimated that 6-9 percent of the U.S. school-age population is affected by ADHD.

Diagnostic Features

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., revised) identifies three subtypes of ADD/ADHD, each of which requires six or more criteria for diagnosis:

1. Inattentive type
 - Pays little attention to details; makes careless mistakes.
 - Has a short attention span.
 - Does not listen when spoken to directly.
 - Does not follow instructions; fails to finish tasks.
 - Has difficulty organizing tasks.
 - Avoids tasks that require sustained mental effort.
 - Loses things.
 - Is easily distracted
 - Is forgetful in daily activities

2. Hyperactive/impulsive type

Hyperactive symptoms are the following:

- Fidgets; squirms in seat.
- Leaves seat when remaining seated is expected.
- Often runs about or climbs excessively at inappropriate times.
- Has difficulty playing quietly.
- Talks excessively.

Impulsivity symptoms are the following:

- Blurts out answers before answers are completed.
- Has difficulty waiting his/her turn.
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others.

3. Combined type

This category includes children who meet criteria for both the Inattentive and the Hyperactive/Impulsive types.

In addition to the criteria above, to be diagnosed with ADHD a child must: manifest symptoms prior to age 7, present symptoms for at least six months, and present symptoms in more than one setting (school, home, community). Symptomatology must be excessive and functionally impairing beyond what is expected for the child's developmental level or age.

Although it is possible to diagnose this syndrome earlier, most children are not diagnosed with ADHD until they are four- or five-years old, when they first enter a structured setting that requires sustained attention. Most diagnoses of ADHD are made by pediatricians at the request of a parent or as the result of a referral from a teacher or child-care provider. Diagnosis is generally made by parental report and history corroborated by clinical observation. More specific symptom patterns can be identified through standardized testing performed by a psychologist.

ADHD in the Classroom

In the classroom, the young child with ADHD might present in several different ways. The inattentive child is easily distractible, and has greater than typical difficulty staying focused. Such children may often appear dreamy or confused, have trouble starting and completing work, and demonstrate poor time management and organizational skills. The hyperactive/impulsive child often challenges teachers and classmates with disruptive and inappropriate behaviors. These children usually display a need for more physical movement than is tolerated in the typical classroom environment. All of these children are likely to have messy desks and backpacks, lose their papers and school materials, and forget important information or possessions. Given the coincidence of diagnosis with children's early classroom experiences, some critics suggest that the child's behavior is an indication of developmentally inappropriate environments and/or expectations rather than a symptom of a disorder.

There are many useful intervention strategies for optimizing the child's experience in the classroom or child-care setting. The child's seating can be customized to suit their individual requirements. For example, some children benefit from preferential seating close to the teacher, in the front of the classroom, to minimize visual distractions. Other children benefit from seating in the rear of the classroom to enable them to move around freely without disturbing others, and

to reduce their impulse to locate the source of distracting sounds. Students can be seated close to more attentive, quieter peers who can serve as role models. The classroom can be organized to ensure a minimum of visual and auditory distractions.

Because children with ADHD have difficulty establishing and maintaining internal structure, they can benefit greatly from increased structure in the environment. Consistent classroom routines, visible indicators of schedules and tasks, clear and simple instructions, and a calm and relaxed classroom tone are generally beneficial. For inattentive children, it is crucial to maintain eye contact and use a variety of strategies to ensure that the child acknowledges and comprehends instructions. Gentle physical reminders to refocus may be useful. Many hyperactive children respond well to breaks that allow for physical movement and deep pressure (carrying heavy objects, doing jumping-jacks, running errands); these kinds of breaks should be incorporated into normal classroom routines as much as possible.

A general rule of thumb for accommodating children with ADHD in the classroom is to identify inappropriate behavior and support children in finding appropriate substitute behavior that satisfies their need for additional movement. For example, a child who repeatedly taps a pencil on a desk could be encouraged to squeeze a squishy ball instead, or a child who spins on the floor during circle time could be offered the opportunity to take a movement break by doing jumping jacks in the hallway or running an errand for the teacher.

Given the behavioral challenges these children present, it is easy to neglect the strengths that they can bring to a group. Often they are among the brightest and most energetic children in a classroom. They may compensate for their lack of organization with a capacity to get physical tasks done. Their distractibility may lead to creative options not considered by others. And their sociability, although often disruptive, may also be important in engaging other children in a project.

ADHD at Home

Young children with ADHD usually require additional patience, practice, and skill from their caregivers. Because multitasking and following sequential instructions is exceptionally difficult for these children, central family routines such as dressing, preparing for bed, and mealtimes at home and in restaurants often become battlegrounds. Sibling relationships can be negatively impacted by the negative attention directed by parents toward the child with ADHD.

Intervention strategies at home may involve behavior modification and methods for enhancing self-esteem. A calm, consistent demeanor affords the child the opportunity to attempt to self-regulate in accordance with environmental demands. Some of the strategies useful in the classroom may also be appropriate at home, for example, empowering the child by creating a list of daily tasks that the child can independently follow and check off. Adults can help children take responsibility for their possessions by setting up systems for storage and easy access to frequently used personal belongings. For hyperactive children, a degree of flexibility in structured daily activities (meals, homework, etc.) can help decrease conflict. Safe and appropriate outlets for physical movement can be

tremendously helpful for these children. Parents can help reduce inappropriate behaviors by suggesting alternatives (e.g., jumping on a home trampoline rather than on the couch; running around the yard rather than the living room).

Inattentive children often benefit from taking frequent breaks, or alternating between quiet and active tasks. The environment can be modified to reduce distracting elements, for example by using a white noise machine, turning off the TV, or creating a designated area in the home that is conducive to calming down.

Associated Disorders

ADHD often coexists with other associated features and disorders. Impulse control problems, temper outbursts, behavioral rigidity, poor frustration tolerance, and intense anger are frequently seen in conjunction with ADHD. Children with ADHD are more likely to also display symptoms of other disorders such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Mood Disorders, including Anxiety and Depression, Learning and Communication Disorders, and Tourettes Syndrome.

Differential Diagnosis of ADHD

Because inattention and hyperactivity may result from a variety of causes, particularly in young children, differential diagnosis of ADHD is critical. It is necessary to rule out neurological syndromes (particularly absence epilepsy); other psychiatric disorders such as autism, anxiety, and Asperger syndrome; cognitive impairments and learning disabilities, such as Nonverbal Learning Disorder; and processing difficulties, such as Sensory Integration Disorder, Central Auditory Disorder, and visual-processing disorders.

Treatment of ADHD

Treatment of ADHD is multimodal. Pharmacotherapy may incorporate different categories of medication including predominantly stimulants, but also antidepressants, anticonvulsants, or antihypertensives. Psychological interventions may incorporate behavior modification, parental management training, and family as well as individual counseling. Alternative options are also becoming more available from a variety of specialists, with variable results. Some techniques discussed frequently in the literature on ADHD include homeopathy and diet, computer-assisted training, biofeedback, hypnotherapy, mind/body techniques, sensory integration training, and applied kinesiology. Professionals in the field of early childhood special education can also help to identify the extent to which developmentally appropriate classroom routines and curriculum activities might reduce the extent of ADHD-type behaviors.

Treatment of ADHD is most likely to be successful when parents and teachers work together to monitor children's responses to modifications to the classroom or home environment, behavioral interventions, and/or medications. Communication between home and school is particularly helpful in identifying the triggers of problem behaviors, assessing the effects of medication, and evaluating the

effectiveness of intervention strategies utilized in the classroom. *See also* Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s).

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Rika Alper and Cornelia Santschi

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) refers to methods, other than speech, that are used to communicate with and improve the communication of children with severe speech and language disabilities.

All human beings communicate. In fact, it might be stated that human beings are unable to not communicate. Whether it be with words, other vocalizations, gestures, facial expressions, or different types of body language, we are constantly conveying a stream of messages to others, either knowingly or unwittingly. The primary expressive method of communication used by most members of society involves natural speech. However, some children are unable to rely on speech as a primary method of oral communication either temporarily or permanently. These individuals include children with intellectual disabilities, autism, apraxia, neuromotor problems such as cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, and developmental verbal apraxia. Some of these children may also exhibit difficulties with written communication. In such cases, practitioners may see a need to enhance these children's effectiveness of communication, oral or written, by introducing augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

There are no candidacy requirements for the introduction of AAC. To the contrary, a zero exclusion policy is applied, suggesting children may benefit from these methods regardless of type or severity of disabilities. The key criterion in pursuing AAC for children is not their demonstration of specific prerequisite behaviors but rather a search for effective methods of communication for those whose speech is insufficient in addressing everyday communication needs.

The term "augmentative" suggests the goal is to supplement extant communication methods that are already proving to be effective for the child, even if only marginally. Rather than eliminate these residual skills, the child is encouraged to continue relying on them while turning to AAC as a means of expanding communication options in terms of content, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Some situations call for applying AAC as an alternative method of communication. For example, children may rely on challenging behaviors, such as screaming,

hitting, and pinching, to convey basic wants and needs. An educational goal might involve replacing these behaviors with more conventional, socially appropriate messages conveyed via an AAC system. Other children rely on behaviors that are so subtle and idiosyncratic that only the most familiar listeners can guess their intended meanings. AAC may replace such behaviors, providing opportunities to communicate more conventionally and thus effectively with a broader range of conversational partners.

AAC is not merely a thing, but should be perceived of in terms of an entire “system.” While the various aided (e.g., computers, speech-generating devices, and communication books) and unaided (e.g., gestures and sign language) methods of communication are important, AAC consists of far more than the method by which communication is carried out. AAC can be depicted in relation to four primary components: symbols, aids, strategies, and techniques.

Symbols

Symbols can be graphic (e.g., photographs and line drawings), auditory (e.g., auditory scanning, where possible choices are presented aurally and the child indicates when she hears the desired message), tactile (e.g., Braille), and gestural (e.g., sign language). The level and complexity of symbols used for a particular child is determined by many factors, including the child’s sensory and cognitive skills. For example, a child with severe to profound intellectual disabilities might be found to be a candidate for symbols represented by actual objects or photographs as opposed to line drawings. Another child may be capable of using traditional orthography (e.g., spelling) as a primary symbol set. An important part of an AAC assessment involves determining a child’s capabilities to use symbols of increasing complexity and abstractness. Skills in this domain may be targeted as part of a broader effort to enhance literacy skills.

Aids

Aids, whether they are electronic or nonelectronic, are the systems used to transmit and receive messages. They may be something as simple as a page on which a choice of two photographs are affixed, to something as complex as an electronic device containing more than a hundred different symbols that can be combined to formulate an infinite number of messages.

The type of aid selected is based on a highly individualized process that typically employs some type of feature matching between the capabilities (e.g., cultural, academic, language, cognitive, motoric, behavioral, perceptual, sensory, and emotional) of the child and the operational requirements of the particular device. The process proceeds systematically and generally includes the following steps:

1. The child’s communication needs and opportunities for communication are identified.
2. Present methods by which the child communicates, and their relative effectiveness, are determined.
3. The child’s capabilities, cited above, are assessed.

4. A list of possible AAC options is generated based on the child's capabilities as well as characteristics of people and settings in which the system will be used immediately and in the future.
5. The child field tests equipment considered for adoption.

In most cases, an AAC system will not consist of a single device or method of communication but instead be comprised of multimodal means of communication. Children must learn to recognize when any one particular means of communication is most effective based on experiential and environmental considerations. Their abilities to code switch, moving from one method of communication to another based on partner and setting variables, is viewed as an integral component of their communicative competence.

Many variables must be considered in finding the right match between a child and an aid. In the case of young AAC users, aids should be evaluated in relation to the following factors:

- Flexibility to accommodate children's increasing linguistic abilities over time.
- Extent to which they can be used to foster language and communication development.
- The range of communicative functions (i.e., purposes for communicating such as commenting, answering, requesting information, sharing novel information, requesting objects and actions, requesting clarification, and developing and maintaining social relationships) that can be expressed.
- Ability to address present and future communication needs.
- Number of environments in which they can be used effectively.
- Variety of familiar and unfamiliar communication partners with which they can be used.
- Acceptability to children and their families.
- Cost.
- Maintenance requirements and overall durability.
- Extent to which they enhance the quality of the lives of children and their families.

As indicated above, these various aid characteristics are weighed relative to children's capabilities. Evaluation of the latter requires a multidisciplinary evaluation by an AAC team. Membership on the team can vary depending on the task at hand but often includes parents, teachers, speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists. Other professionals that may be involved include rehabilitation engineers, administrators, equipment vendors, psychologists, audiologists, and pediatricians.

Strategies

Strategies refer to methods of enhancing the effectiveness or efficiency of message transmission. They include procedures such as word prediction (i.e., activation of each letter results in presentation of a menu of words with the highest probability of following that particular letter or sequence of letters), letter prediction, and dynamic display (where activation of a key opens up a page of additional vocabulary, expanding the range of meanings that can be conveyed). They also include techniques for arranging symbols such as categorizing them in relation to "who," "what," "what doing," "where," "how," and "in what manner,"

listing items alphabetically, and/or arranging letters to correspond with the typical QWERTY keyboard.

Strategies also incorporate patterns of interaction that foster children's effective uses of their different AAC methods. For example, conversational partners are encouraged to be patient, to give children ample time to formulate and transmit their messages, to provide numerous opportunities and reasons for communication throughout the day, and to model effective uses of AAC and other communication methods.

Techniques

Techniques relate to how messages are accessed and transmitted. The two techniques for activating messages via aided communication are direct selection and scanning. Direct selection involves pointing (whether that is with a finger, head pointer, optical light indicator, or some other source) directly at the desired item. Scanning involves sequential presentations of different items until the desired item is highlighted at which point the communicator typically uses a switch to select the item or continue the scanning pattern.

While the goals of AAC are many and varied, overarching themes include maximizing effectiveness of communication while simultaneously fostering children's participation and inclusion in their schools and communities. Interventions involving AAC are carried out most effectively in children's homes, schools, and other natural settings. They attempt to involve as many communication partners, in as many settings, as is feasible.

Objectives are integrated into curricula, rather than constituting isolated behaviors. For example, rather than teaching choice making in a contrived setting, an SLP might analyze the various environments in which interactions typically occur and recruit natural partners in these same environments to present children with systematic opportunities to make choices using their AAC systems. Children's self-determination can be fostered through this process of role release.

In conclusion, AAC represents a programmatic team response to an existing or projected set of challenges. Effectiveness of AAC is defined in relation to the extent to which it supports enhanced qualities of life for children and their families.

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Stephen N. Calculator

Autism

In 1943, Dr. Leo Kanner of the Johns Hopkins Hospital first described the syndrome of early infantile autism. His diagnostic criteria were based on a child's inability to relate to others, a characteristic that he described as "extreme aloneness." In the 1960s this disability was thought to have a low incidence. In

2006, the Research Institute and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 1 in 166 children is diagnosed with a form of autism, a ratio that no longer qualifies as a “low incidence.” Although much research is being conducted, the cause of this increase, or even the extent to which the increase in numbers diagnosed represents an actual increase, is not yet known. Autism occurs in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Again for unknown reasons, three to four times as many boys as girls are diagnosed.

Since 1952, physicians and psychologists have used the *The Diagnostic and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) for identifying disorders, including autism, and differentiating one from another. This manual, published by the American Psychiatric Association, is revised frequently. The current edition, (DSM-IV-TR), lists the condition of Pervasive Developmental Disorder as an umbrella term under which are included Autistic Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Asperger Disorder, Retts Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder—Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS). In 1994 the organization **Zero to Three**, the National Center for Infants Toddlers and Families, created the *Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood* to identify and differentiate disorders as they are seen in children from birth through three years of age. A revised edition (DC:0-3R) was released in 2005.

The authors of this book describe Multisystem Developmental Disorder as a disorder of relating and communication resulting from biologically based differences in a variety of interconnected systems including sensory modulation, sensory integration, and motor planning. They liken it to Pervasive Developmental Disorder. The notion of a spectrum of disorders was first described in the early 1980s by Lorna Wing who wrote about a range of related disorders from autism to Asperger. The term Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is now coming into wide use to clarify that the term autism is not one condition.

At the beginning of this century the United States Office of Special Education Programs requested that the National Research Council of the National Academy of Science undertake a study of what is known about autism relevant to children from birth to eight. The findings are published in a book entitled *Educating Children with Autism* (Lord and McGee, 2001). Echoing the foregoing, the authors write, “The manifestations of autism vary considerably across children and within individual children over time. There is no single behavior that is always typical of autism and no behavior that would automatically exclude an individual child from a diagnosis of autism, even though there are strong and consistent commonalities, especially relative to social deficit.”

There is agreement that the core deficits of this spectrum of disorders, when seen in early childhood, include significant impairments in the areas of socialization, communication, and behavior. Some signs and symptoms associated with this spectrum at this age include but are not limited to the following:

- Lack of joint regard or shared attention.
- Impairment in gestural (e.g., pointing) and reciprocal communication.
- Lack of imitative, functional, and pretend play that is appropriate to developmental age.
- Difficulty regulating emotions.

In some children hints of future problems are evident early in infancy but for most children problems with communication and social engagement become evident as the child's skills begin to lag behind other children of the same age. Some children begin to develop normally and then between 18 and 24 months lose language and social skills they had previously acquired. There are other problems that frequently accompany ASD. It is estimated that one in four children with ASD will develop seizures starting in early childhood or adolescence. Sensory problems, including difficulties perceiving and integrating information through the senses, are also common and may explain many of the repetitive or stereotyped behaviors such as hand flapping and rocking.

Theories about the etiology of this complex disability include the influences of genetics, infectious disease, prenatal and postnatal trauma, immune system deficiencies, and metabolic disorders. Recent studies suggest that for families with one child with autism the risk of having another child with autism is as high as 1 in 20 or 5 percent. Although there is general agreement that this is a biologically based disorder, there are currently no biological markers or "tests" that detect autism. Its diagnosis is based upon parental report and the observations of clinicians. There are tools that are used with these observations, for example, the Childhood Autism Rating Scales (CARS) by Schopler et al. and the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) by Robins et al. (2001). The items on the latter scale that are most significant in differentially identifying autism in children over 24 months include lack of the following:

- Interest in other children.
- Use of index finger to point in order to indicate interest in something.
- Showing parent or caregiver an object.
- Imitating a familiar adult's expressions and/or actions.
- Responding to his/her name when called.
- Visually following another's point gesture to an object.

Clinicians may also use the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule—Generic (ADOS-G) (Lord et al., 2000), a semistructured play-based tool to determine whether a child meets the criteria for autism in the communication, social interaction, and imaginative play domains. No tool should be used in isolation, however, and a diagnosis of autism should be made only as part of a comprehensive assessment.

The early belief that autism was caused by cold or aloof parenting has been discredited. However, because this disorder can affect a child's ability to communicate, form relationships with others and respond appropriately to the external world, it can be disruptive to attachment patterns between children and their primary caregivers. Therefore, seeing families as the primary interveners and professionals as their allies is essential in promoting growth and development in their children. Providers of service to these families should be sensitive to the difficulties parents experience in diagnosing and treating these children. These parents see what looks to be typical development over the first months and even years of life. They also experience a lack of relatedness on the part of the child that affects how they feel as a parent. Although these features may also be true of some other developmental conditions, the predominance of highly intensive

interventions and the perception that if the condition is not treated early it will not be ameliorated add additional stresses in the lives of these parents.

Studies have shown that early detection and intervention can have significant effects on the progress and functioning level of children. A wide range of approaches to intervention is currently available. Some focus specifically on and work through the physiology of the disorder (e.g., dietary and pharmacological), others the behavioral manifestations (e.g., applied behavioral analysis), and still others a combination of the biological, psychological, and social elements (e.g., developmental, individual differences, relationship-based approach). While there are several methodologies currently in use, “there are virtually no data on the relative merits of one model over another” (National Research Council, 2001, p. 171), nor is there any apparent association between any particular current intervention and recovery from autism” (p. 43).

Among model comprehensive programs for young children there is, however, agreement about the components of successful intervention (Hurth et al., 1999; National Research Council, 2001).

- Intensity of engagement: Engagement refers to sustained attention to and participation with a person or a developmentally appropriate activity.
- Individualization of services for children and families: Profile of services, outcomes, settings, measurement of progress should be tailored to individual child and family.
- Family involvement: Family is given support in accommodating their child’s needs in everyday situations.
- Systematic, planful teaching: Planning includes assurance of developmentally appropriate, functional interventions that have a coherent theoretical basis.
- Specialized curriculum: Curriculum addresses the core deficits of ASD such as communication, social/emotional interaction, play, and problem solving.
- Objective measurements of progress: Objective, observable and anecdotal measurements are used to determine whether a child is benefiting from intervention.
- Opportunities for inclusion with typically developing peers in natural environments: Appropriate supports are provided in home and community settings to promote fully inclusive experiences among peers.
- Earliest possible start to intervention.

In the United States current federal legislation such as **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** supports **early childhood special education** services for children with autism and other developmental disabilities. The youngest children, defined in each state as either birth through three or birth through five, receive **early intervention** through the state departments of education, health, or human services. These services are provided in inclusive environments that are natural to the child, for example, home, child care, and community settings. While some services are at public expense (e.g., evaluation, development of an **Individual Family Service Plan**), families participate in paying for some services. Services for older children are provided by the state department of education in the “least restrictive” school environment that can provide a free and appropriate public education.

Although ASD is currently viewed as not yet curable, there is treatment available. As there are many treatment options available, there are just as many outcomes. It is important to receive the correct diagnosis. The degree of success of any

treatment program will depend on accurate diagnosis, the characteristics of the child, and the extent to which treatment is individualized and based on the child's unique profile. Given these supports and our increasing knowledge, it is reasonable to look to the future with positive expectations. *See also* Inclusion.

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Antoinette Spiotta, Corinne G. Catalano, and Sue Fernandez

B

Baker, Katherine Read. *See* Read, Katherine

Bandura, Albert (1925–)

Albert Bandura was born December 4, 1925, in Mundare, northern Canada, of Polish and Ukrainian immigrants. As a teenager, Bandura attended the only high school in town, where he learned the value of self-direction. He obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, in 1949, and his Masters and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Iowa, in 1951 and 1952, respectively. His major advisor was Arthur Benton and he was also highly influenced by the writing of Kenneth Spence. In 1953, he became an assistant professor at Stanford University, where he now is the David Starr Jordan Professor of Social Science in Psychology. Over the course of his long career, Bandura has received over a dozen scientific honors and awards, including awards for lifetime achievements from the American Psychological Association and the American Association of Behavioral Therapy. He has also received honorary degrees from 14 universities worldwide. Bandura married Virginia Varns, a nursing instructor, and has two daughters and several grandchildren.

His major contribution to education, psychology, and other fields was to propose and develop the **social cognitive theory** (previously named the social learning theory). The major premise of this is that people are proactive agents in their own learning and change. They are self-organizing, self-reflecting, and self-regulating (Bandura, 1986), and not merely reactors to external environmental forces. Several major components of this theory are the triadic reciprocal causation model: observational learning and modeling, self-efficacy, and self-regulation (see **Social Cognitive Theory** for more details). Through his social cognitive theory he has influenced education in many ways. His interpretation of children's social development was a specific contribution to the field of early childhood education. Bandura's Bobo doll experiments revealed the power of violence as portrayed by media on children's aggression, and showed methods to diminish aggression, promote prosocial functioning and foster the adoption of moral standards of conduct

(Zimmerman and Schunk, 2003). In the area of children's **cognitive development**, Bandura's studies contradicted the prevalent stage theories, such as **Piaget's**, by emphasizing that children's learning was influenced by their social learning experiences, goals, and development of knowledge and skill. Regarding children's observational learning, Bandura contended that teachers' explanations linked to demonstrations significantly enhance students' conceptual learning. Bandura's work shows that self-efficacy beliefs involve people's self-judgments of performance capabilities in particular domains of functioning. These beliefs not only enhance achievement, they also promote intrinsic motivation and reduce anxiety (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2003). Bandura also explained self-regulation as the degree to which people are able to exert self-regulatory control over their level of functioning and the events in their lives. His theory explains a cyclical process of self-regulation through goal-setting, self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction.

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Srilata Bhattacharyya and Sherri L. Horner

Bank Street

The Bank Street College of Education was founded in 1916 and is considered a leader in child-centered education in the United States. Its mission is to discover the environments in which children can grow and learn to their full potential and to encourage teachers and others to create these environments. Founded by Lucy Sprague **Mitchell** and first known as the Bureau of Educational Experiments, Bank Street has continued to reflect the vision and practice of progressive theorists, educators, and social reformers who believe that we can build a better society through education.

Over the years, Bank Street's education philosophy has been most frequently called either "the Bank Street approach" or the "**developmental-interaction approach**." Although this approach is not unique to Bank Street, the college has been putting the theory behind it into practice for almost 90 years.

The College today comprises an independent, fully accredited Graduate School of Education, serving over 900 students and offering master's degrees in a variety of educational programs; a Division of Children's Programs consisting of a Family Center (a model child-care program for infants, toddlers, and preschool children, as well as a home-based program for 50 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers), a School for Children (serving over 500 students and consisting of a pre-K through 8 demonstration school), and a Head Start program, among others; and a Division of Continuing Education, which offers short-term courses, certificate programs, and staff development to educators and others, as well as direct service programs

to children and young adults; major outreach programs, such as New Beginnings, a project to restructure early childhood education in the Newark Public Schools; and the Center for Universal PreKindergarten, which supports educators, improves the quality of Pre-K programs, and, most importantly, achieves positive outcomes for children. Bank Street develops projects, often in conjunction with other educational institutions and communities that address issues arising from the emerging needs of children and families, ranging from literacy to kith and kin care to the introduction of new technologies into the classroom.

Bank Street also has a publications and media group, which publishes books and multimedia materials that over the years have included critically acclaimed and prize-winning products such as *The Voyage of the Mimi* TV series, the *Bank Street Readers* series, and the seventy-two-book *Ready-to-Read* series. Recent collaborations include *Jojo's Circus*, a preschool interactive television show; prekindergarten and kindergarten educational materials and teacher curriculum guides. Bank Street also has a Bookstore, which is recognized as New York's best source of material for and about children.

Today Bank Street is one of five institutions of teacher preparation designated as a national resource center for educators by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. It is also one of three graduate U.S. teacher-preparation programs to be hailed as exemplary by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. In the spring of 2002, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education accredited Bank Street College of Education at the initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation levels. In 2002, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, in partnership with the Annenberg, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations, selected Bank Street for its ambitious reform initiative, Teachers for a New Era. This project is designed to stimulate construction of excellent teacher preparation programs at selected U.S. colleges and universities.

In today's increasingly technological and multicultural world, Lucy Sprague Mitchell's words and actions continue to inspire us as we seek ways to preserve and strengthen our work in response to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. For more information on Bank Street, visit www.bankstreet.edu. See also Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

Maria Benejan and Toni Porter

Behaviorism

Behaviorism began as a methodological movement in psychology during the early part of the twentieth century. Its founder was John B. Watson (1878-1958), who believed that psychology would never become a legitimate scientific discipline until its subject matter was the *behavior* of organisms (both animal and human) and its methods included only objective observations and measures like those used by natural scientists. He rejected the approach of other contemporary psychologists who were using *introspection* to study mental and emotional states, and instead focused on observing how environmental stimuli produced conditioned responses. Although Watson's extreme position about the importance of the environment and learning in shaping human development was rejected, his

objective methodological approach has had a major impact through its influence on psychologists such as B. F. Skinner and the eventual widespread application of learning principles to human problems.

Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904–1990) was the founder of *radical behaviorism*. Like Watson, Skinner carried out his most important experimental work on animals. He did not believe in building theories of behavior; rather, he recommended that scientists generate empirical data from which to draw inductive principles about behavior prediction and control. Skinner called his method the *experimental analysis of behavior*, which was considered “radical” at the time because it accepted states of mind and introspection as existent and worthy of scientific study. However, Skinner did not view mental states as causes of behavior. He saw them as types of verbal behavior and therefore capable of being measured and analyzed.

Skinner created a method of studying behavior that allowed him to control the environment and carefully observe and record its effects. He designed the now famous *Skinner box*, which included a food dispenser and bar connected to another one of his inventions, the *cumulative recorder*. He learned that the rate with which an animal pressed the bar was controlled by stimuli (food pellets) that followed its occurrence, or what Skinner called *contingencies of reinforcement*. He eventually discovered several principles that described how these contingencies worked, namely, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment, and extinction. These principles, which describe how consequences affect the future occurrence of behavior, are familiar to anyone who has taken a basic course in psychology, child development, or early childhood education. They are called *operant* principles because they describe what occurs when an organism operates on the environment.

In addition to his operant learning principles, Skinner identified different *schedules of reinforcement* and described the process of *discrimination learning*. Procedures such as *shaping* (reinforcement of successive approximations to the target behavior), *chaining* (reinforcement of simple behaviors that are then strung together to form more complex behavior), and *fading* (the gradual withdrawal of prompts and cues that guide the performance of complex behavior) also emerged from Skinner’s experimental work.

In 1938, Skinner published his findings in *The Behavior of Organisms*, which, along with a series of other books and journal articles published in the 1940s and 1950s, formed the conceptual foundation for a group of individuals who established the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* in 1958. It was through this journal as well as professional groups like the Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior that like-minded scholars presented and published original research, review articles, and theoretical papers relevant to the behavior of individual organisms.

Another group of scientists, however, was interested in the application of behavioral principles to socially important human problems, many of which involved typically developing children as well as children with disabilities. They did not study behavior in the laboratory; instead, they observed children and their caregivers in natural settings such as homes, preschool programs, and early intervention classrooms, the very places where socially important behaviors were

likely to occur. Within these settings, this group of researchers used the inductive approach to research that Skinner used and developed observation methods and research designs that allowed them to conduct experimental analyses of individual child and adult behavior. They called themselves *applied behavior analysts*. More than any other group of behaviorists, it was they who identified the contingencies and contextual features of early education settings that promoted adaptive behaviors in children with and without disabilities. In 1968, the first issue of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* (JABA) was published. It included an article, "Some Current Dimensions of Applied Behavior Analysis" in which the authors, Donald Baer, Montrose Wolf, and Todd Risley, described the central features of the ABA approach.

Over the course of the next several decades, applied behavior analysts repeatedly demonstrated that procedures based on operant principles, in combination with others such as modeling, could be utilized effectively by parents and early education teachers to address a wide variety of behavior and learning problems. Mild to moderate problems in children with and without disabilities such as high rates of social isolation, opposition, and aggression and low rates of turn taking, sharing, resting during naptime, and following instructions were (among many other behaviors) subject to teacher intervention by the proper application of operant procedures such as differential attention (praise and ignoring), timeout (sit and watch), and prompting, fading, and shaping. One of the goals of this work was to allow children to come under the control of their *natural communities of reinforcement* where they would continue to learn in response to the consequences typically present in teacher-directed and peer-group contexts. Many of these studies were conducted in preschools at the University of Washington, the University of Kansas, and the University of Illinois (where Sidney Bijou directed the Child Behavior Laboratory).

Another area in which applied behavior analysts made a major contribution is in the development of procedures for promoting language, both in typically developing children and children with disabilities. *Incidental teaching*, for example, was used initially to promote more elaborate language in children from low-income families who were attending compensatory preschool programs, and was eventually modified to address the language deficits of children with disabilities. Incidental teaching opportunities occur when a child shows an interest in something, such as a play material, by approaching and reaching for it or asking for help in obtaining it. By showing such interest, the child defines a topic of instruction for the teacher who can then briefly model a new language form or encourage the child to practice an already established one.

Although there is impressive evidence that operant-based procedures have positive effects when used with typically developing children, there is even more evidence for the beneficial effects of these procedures on children with disabilities. A well-known example is the research of Ivar Lovaas who investigated the effects of operant procedures on the behavior of young autistic children. Today, intervention methods based on his approach (discrete trial training) and the work of numerous other researchers who have focused on improving the lives of autistic children and their families are being applied by early childhood educators and parents in nearly every state in the country. Applied behavior analysts also

have developed procedures to address adaptive, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive delays in children with a wide range of disabilities that can be found in research journals such as *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* and the *Journal of Early Intervention*.

Despite the extensive empirical support for the positive effects of operant-based procedures, there remains a persistent devaluation and misunderstanding of this approach among professionals in the fields of early childhood regular and special education. Although the use of sit and watch (timeout) is the most common source of controversy, there also is disagreement about the use of praise, both because of the narrowness of the concept and as a detriment to intrinsic motivation. Common criticisms of the behavioral perspective as it has been applied in early childhood regular and special education can be found in the bibliography and also traced through the URL links listed at the end of this entry.

In addition to developing and evaluating operant-based procedures used in response to child behavior and learning problems, applied behavior analysts brought their research methods to bear on the *environmental contexts* in which children and teachers spend their time, and in which teaching methods from a variety of disciplines are used. The division of space into areas, type and arrangement of play materials, activity schedules, mealtime routines, transition procedures, group size, and location of staff are common physical, programmatic, and social features that characterize all early childhood classrooms. Early educators have known for some time about the importance of these features for ensuring that children productively engage the environment, and some have written extensively about ways the classroom environment should be organized. However, their recommendations have been based largely on theory, teaching experience, and anecdotal accounts of classroom organization.

The experimental analyses of the organizational features of early childhood settings began with the work of Todd Risley and his colleagues who focused on the operation of caregiving environments such as day-care centers, nursing homes, and after-school recreation programs. This work was undertaken for two reasons. First, if a setting is organized to encourage children's engagement and learning and to make it easier for teachers to perform routine care, there will be more time for teachers to play and talk with them as well as teach them. In this type of environment, children will engage in far less disruption, aggression, and noncompliance, reducing the need for operant-based procedures. Thus, the first aim was the promotion of favorable conditions for human development and the prevention of child behavior problems.

The second reason for undertaking such analyses is that well-organized classrooms make it more likely that operant-based procedures will be effective when they do need to be used. Procedures such as modeling, differential attention, sit and watch (time-out), and incidental teaching depend for their optimal effects on a well-organized, stimulating environment. For example, in order for a brief timeout from reinforcement to be effective, the child must want to return to activities that are stimulating and fun and refrain from behaving in ways that result in brief removal from those activities.

The effects of specific ways of organizing classroom space, presenting materials, or scheduling daily events on children's engagement with their surroundings

cannot be explained strictly within the framework of Skinner's operant learning principles. It is more useful to think of them as examples of the more recent concept of *setting events*, complex social and environmental conditions that set the occasion for and make it more likely that previously acquired behavior will occur. For example, if meals are served family-style in early childhood classrooms, with bowls of food passed from child to child (rather than full plates simply being handed to children), the environmental and social conditions are present for children and teachers to talk about the food and for children to learn about serving themselves appropriate portions. This context also provides teachers with opportunities to focus on children who require individualized teaching to develop more elaborate language.

The contributions of behaviorism (specifically applied behavior analysis) to early childhood regular and special education range from operant-based teaching strategies and procedures that address behavior problems to experimental demonstrations that behavior and the procedures designed to change it are inseparable from the context in which they occur. Particularly for early childhood special education, this approach has facilitated a focus on the individual child and the natural environment as the appropriate place for intervention, strategies that are consistent with the *principle of normalization*. Applied behavior analysts and others who have adopted their research methods continue to investigate socially important topics of great interest to early childhood educators.

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Web Sites: Behavior Analysis, Division 25 of the American Psychological Association. Available online at <http://www.apa.org/divisions/div25/>; Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning. Available online at <http://www.csefel.uiuc.edu>; Stanford Encyclopedia of Psychology. Available online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/behaviorism/>.

Vey M. Nordquist, Sandra Twardosz, and William Bryan Higgins

Behavior Management and Guidance

In many early childhood settings, the term *behavior management* is no longer in vogue. Like the word *discipline*, which has also fallen largely out of favor, it carries a connotation of the use of power by teachers, a practice that many in the field

do not endorse. The more positive term *guidance*—as used in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Settings* (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997)—has replaced both terms in the minds of many early childhood educators, reflecting a movement to a more humanistic and constructivist view of child development where the child is an active participant in his own learning and the teacher is seen as a facilitator. That's not to say, however, that there is no longer a need to understand the principles of *behavior management*—now usually reserved for especially difficult and persistent behavior problems for which techniques associated with **behaviorism** are preferred.

Guidance refers to the teacher's efforts to help children behave in ways that will enhance all aspects of their development and learning, both as individuals and as part of a group. This is most effectively achieved when teachers recognize that inappropriate behavior is an opportunity to teach, not punish. Guided by the ecological theory of Urie **Bronfenbrenner**, teachers can draw upon a wide body of knowledge and skills and consider not only the child but also their own expectations and interactions with the child, the physical and socioemotional environment of the child-care setting, the child's family and **culture**, and the broader community. The most effective strategies available to teachers include understanding risk and protective factors for challenging behavior; preventing challenging behavior by developing a positive, caring relationship with each child and creating a warm and welcoming physical environment and social community within the classroom; and utilizing individualized intervention plans to respond to severe and persistent challenging behavior.

An understanding of the risk and protective factors that shape challenging behavior makes it easier to meet children's needs and help them to succeed. Risk factors have a cumulative effect. A child who has just one faces no more risk of developing challenging behavior than a child with none. But a child who has two is dealing with a risk four times as great (Yoshikawa, 1994). The risk factors for challenging behavior fall into two broad categories, biological and environmental.

Biological risk factors include genes (which influence traits associated with aggressive behavior); **temperament** (problems are more likely when the temperament of the child and the expectations of the family or teacher do not coincide); **Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** (ADD/ADHD); complications of pregnancy and birth; substance abuse during pregnancy; language and cognition disorders (see also **Learning Disability**); and gender (boys are at greater risk for aggressive behavior than are girls).

Environmental risk factors include problems in the parent-child relationship (which acts as a prototype for the child's future relationships) (see also **Attachment**); **poverty**, and the conditions surrounding it; exposure to **violence** through the media or in person (see also **Domestic Violence**); **child care** (researchers have found a link between problem behavior and the number of hours children spend in child care); and cultural dissonance (respect for a child's culture is essential to formation of a positive self-concept; cultural conflicts between home and school culture can cause challenging behavior).

Increasing protective or opportunity factors can buffer the impact of risk factors and improve children's developmental outcome. This ability to cope with adversity is called *resilience*. A child's most important protective factor against

risk is a warm, responsive, consistent relationship with an adult. Although families usually provide this support, nurturing relationships with teachers and other community members can also foster resilience.

The best way to stop challenging behavior is to prevent it from occurring. Children are less likely to resort to challenging behavior when the teacher's approach and the physical and social environment meet their physical, cognitive, cultural, emotional, and social needs. It may be necessary to individualize many aspects of care in order to meet the needs of one particular child, but the effort is worthwhile. When he or she is able to play and learn successfully, it becomes possible for all the children to play and learn successfully. Prevention can keep children with aggressive behavior from accumulating risk factors and slipping into a downward spiral where they are rejected by peers and teachers, fail at school, join a gang, abuse alcohol or drugs, or become delinquent. Prevention is more effective when it begins early, continues over a long period, is developmentally appropriate, takes place in a real-life setting, and works on several fronts (such as home and school) simultaneously.

As resilience research has shown, a caring relationship with a child is a teacher's most powerful tool for preventing and decreasing challenging behavior. With a warm, supportive adult as a guide and model, children learn to understand and control their own feelings and behavior, care about and trust other people, and see things from another's perspective. In response to their teachers' sensitive handling of their anxieties and challenging behaviors, children's confidence and self-concept grow, along with their desire to experience more of these positive feelings. A solid relationship with the child's family also strengthens a teacher's relationship with the child and enables teachers and families to work together for the child's benefit (see also **Families, Parents, and Parent Involvement**.)

Because teachers' attitudes and behaviors make a substantial contribution to the way children behave, it is important for them to be aware of how their own emotions, past experiences, temperament, values, and culture influence their expectations and reactions in the classroom. Self-reflection (see also John Dewey) enables teachers to increase their self-control, accept and express their feelings, and respond appropriately to children's intense emotions and difficult behavior.

The physical environment can elicit either aggressive or prosocial behavior, depending on how it is arranged (see also **Environmental Assessments in Early Childhood Education**). Children with challenging behaviors often have trouble functioning in a space filled with restrictions, so the arrangement of the room should enable them to move around without reminders. Low bookcases can divide large spaces into uncluttered areas with different functions like dramatic play, messy play, or quiet reading and listening. Learning centers and shelves should be well organized, inviting, and easily accessible. Since crowding can lead to frustration and aggression, it makes sense to limit and control the number of children who can play in each area. Well-marked boundaries and pathways from one spot to another allow children to feel more comfortable and promote cooperative behavior. It may be necessary to reduce the level of stimulation to facilitate the participation of children who find it hard to deal with classroom noise and bustle—for example, those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), **fetal alcohol syndrome** (FAS), hearing loss, or hyper-sensitive temperaments.

The social climate also exerts a powerful influence on behavior. Children are less likely to act aggressively in a cohesive and friendly community (DeRosier et al., 1994). As the leader and primary role model in the classroom, the teacher is responsible for establishing the social climate and influencing children's attitudes and behaviors toward one another. Structured cooperative activities that emphasize the group rather than individuals enhance cooperation during unstructured times and teach children to empathize, work together, negotiate, problem-solve, share, and support one another.

When planning the **curriculum**, teachers must think not only of the skill they wish to teach but also of the behavior they are trying to encourage. Ever since Friedrich **Froebel** founded the first **kindergarten**, European American theorists have believed that being able to make meaningful choices empowers children, who, as a result, do not have to look for inappropriate ways to assert their independence. The program should be developmentally appropriate on the basis of the belief that, if a task is too difficult, children will do whatever they need to do to avoid participating and failing. A less structured program with open-ended materials and activities engenders social interaction and prosocial behavior. Close supervision enables teachers to help children who need extra structure and guidance.

Children feel more secure and function better when there is a consistent routine; clear, positively stated rules that they have helped to create; and the minimum number of transitions, which present a special challenge for children with challenging behaviors. Transitions run more smoothly when the teacher makes them fun, warns children of the upcoming change, and uses strategies such as allowing children who are slow to adapt to have more time and giving children jobs to perform (e.g., putting ten blocks on the shelf). Whole-group activities, such as circle and story time, also require extra planning; holding them less often and/or providing alternate activities for certain children may be helpful.

The teacher's approach toward the acquisition of social and emotional skills (see also **Curriculum, Emotional Development**)—a major developmental task of early childhood—is also important in creating a positive social climate. Teaching social and emotional skills proactively highlights their value, makes the classroom ambience more cooperative, and offers children who need special assistance a chance to learn that they might not have had otherwise. Often based on the social cognitive learning theory of Albert **Bandura**, formal social and emotional skills programs use a variety of methods, including didactic teaching, modeling, group discussion, and role playing. Their focus is usually on emotional regulation and empathy, impulse control, anger management, social problem solving, friendship skills, and responding assertively. It is also important for teachers and socially competent peers to talk about feelings and model, encourage, and reinforce social and emotional skills in ordinary daily interactions.

Even when educators use preventive methods consistently, some children may exhibit challenging behavior. In response, teachers commonly use a number of guidance and behavior management techniques based on a variety of theoretical perspectives, including humanistic and psychoanalytic thought, social learning theory, behaviorist theory, the work of Alfred Adler, and the work of Carl **Rogers**. Models range considerably in the degree of teacher control they employ, from low (Haim Ginott, Thomas Gordon, Alfie Kohn), through medium (Rudolf

Dreikurs, William Glasser), to high (Lee Canter, Fredric Jones). High-control methods have found more followers in schools than in early childhood settings. Even the behavioral-based interventions used for very difficult behavior problems (functional assessment, positive behavior support) have many humanistic aspects.

Advocates of low-control strategies believe that children are active participants in their own learning who flourish in a supportive and democratic classroom where they can make their own choices and construct their own values. The teacher's role is to facilitate children's development by attending to their feelings, thoughts, and ideas.

Those who prefer medium control may choose techniques that are often referred to as behavior management, such as positive reinforcement and logical consequences. Positive reinforcement—a pleasant response that follows a behavior and increases its frequency or intensity—is perhaps the most basic of all strategies. Drawn from behaviorism and **social cognitive theory**, positive reinforcement can be verbal or physical, social, or tangible (although tangible rewards are not used with children who are developing normally). A child who has the teacher's positive attention will probably behave more positively; a child who fails to receive positive attention is likely to seek negative attention. It is therefore important to watch for and acknowledge acceptable behavior. Positive reinforcement extends the child's capacities and helps to replace inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior. Positive reinforcement is most effective when it is delivered immediately and consistently, when it clearly describes the action that is being reinforced, and when it is part of an honest, warm relationship between teacher and child.

Positive reinforcement that takes the form of encouragement is preferred over praise. Encouragement emphasizes behavior and process rather than person and product; recognizes effort and improvement rather than achievement; and lets children know that mistakes are part of learning. Praise, critics charge, motivates children to act for extrinsic reasons and dampens their autonomy, creativity, self-control, self-esteem, and pleasure.

Many teachers utilize natural and logical consequences, a technique popularized by Rudolf Dreikurs, who believed that consequences flow not from the power of adults but from the natural or social order of the real world and that children learn from experiencing the consequences of their own behavior. Some consequences occur naturally, but when natural consequences are too remote or dangerous, teachers may create logical or reasonable consequences instead. The teacher should offer options that relate directly, reasonably, and logically to the child's behavior; the consequences must be enforceable and enforced, but not threatening or punitive.

Punishment—a penalty for wrongdoing, imposed by someone in power who intends it to be unpleasant—provides a quick fix, but its results are fleeting. It suppresses the undesirable behavior only in the punisher's presence and must increase in intensity to remain effective. Punishment undermines the relationship between adult and child and creates a distrust of adults. Although in theory educators frown upon punishment, it sometimes creeps into classrooms in the guise of time-out, a technique that has created controversy in the early childhood community. Rooted in social learning theory and behaviorism, it technically means

time-out from positive reinforcement and typically involves removing a child from the group to sit in a remote area of the room on a specified chair, for one minute for each year of his age, to think about his behavior. Critics maintain that time-out teaches children that the use of power to control others is acceptable and does not help them learn to behave appropriately. It is also said to damage self-esteem by humiliating children in front of their peers, a dire punishment for those from cultures where being part of the group is paramount.

When a child's challenging behavior is severe and/or persistent, an individualized intervention is called for. Two of the most effective and widely adopted behavior management strategies are often used together: functional assessment and positive behavior support. Developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s in work with persons with developmental disabilities, both methods are derived from applied behavior analysis, an offshoot of behaviorism. Because they are so effective in determining the cause of behavioral problems and formulating positive strategies to address them, functional assessment and positive behavior support are often required under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997**.

The underlying principle of functional assessment is that every challenging behavior can be thought of as a child's solution to a problem and a form of communication. The technique requires educators to look at the world through the child's eyes, figure out how the behavior benefits the child, and teach an acceptable behavior that can fulfill those needs instead. The focus of a functional assessment is the child's immediate environment, which provides vital clues about where the behavior is coming from, why it is happening at a particular time and place, the logic behind it, and the function it serves for the child. Even if the behavior is inappropriate, the function seldom is.

A functional assessment and positive behavior support plan are best achieved by a team of all those who work with the child—family, teachers, bus drivers, consultants, and so on. The team's first task is to develop a hypothesis about the function of the challenging behavior and the environmental conditions that cause it, drawing on resources such as the child's records, interviews with parents and teachers, and observation using an A-B-C analysis. Teachers and/or other observers note antecedents (A) or events that take place just before the challenging behavior and seem to trigger it; behavior (B) that can be measured and altered; and consequences (C) that occur after the behavior, including the teacher's own responses to it. These observations are systematically recorded until a clear pattern emerges, confirming or negating the hypothesis about the function.

Functional assessment postulates three possible functions:

- *The child gets something* (attention from an adult or a peer, access to object or activity).
- *The child avoids or escapes from something* (unwelcome requests, difficult tasks, activities, peers, or adults).
- *The child changes the level of stimulation* (Karsh et al., 1995).

Once the function is understood, it becomes possible to design a positive behavior support plan to enable the child to meet her needs. An intervention that is effective in teaching a child how to get what she wants through appropriate means usually utilizes three different methods: changing the environment (the

antecedents and the consequences) so that the challenging behavior becomes unnecessary; replacing the challenging behavior with appropriate behavior that achieves the same outcome for the child more quickly and with less effort; and ignoring the challenging behavior. As the plan is implemented, the team continues to monitor the child's progress in order to evaluate and revise the plan if necessary.

Teachers frequently depend on more than one strategy. Every child is unique, and each requires an approach that fits his or her state of mind, temperament, developmental stage, and culture. With several strategies at their disposal, teachers can choose one or a combination that suits the circumstances. At the same time, it is important for teachers to believe in the strategy—it is unlikely to work if they do not feel comfortable with it or understand the philosophy behind it. *See also* Constructivism; Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education.

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Barbara Kaiser and Judy Sklar Rasminsky

Biculturalism

Biculturalism refers to the process through which individuals enter into contact with a new culture and create a new identity by meshing values, attitudes, and behaviors of their own culture into the new one. In other words, bicultural individuals adapt to ways valued in the new culture while retaining an attachment and identity with their culture of origin. Often, biculturalism has been discussed as a capacity to move from one culture to another with relative ease and learning how to navigate and participate in both worlds. For most children living in multicultural contexts, the process of biculturalization involves the negotiation of their parents' cultural beliefs and attitudes and those of the dominant society.

Bicultural identity formation is a dynamic process that is constantly shifting and being constructed according to specific circumstances. Bicultural identity has also been defined as intercultural identity. Intercultural identity refers to an identity that works toward integration and meshing of two cultures, rather than separation and division. Understanding the importance of biculturalism is essential in the area of early childhood education, given the high influx of **immigration** taking place in the world (particularly in North American and some European countries), and recent discussions on capacity building within Indigenous communities. By supporting biculturalism, the field of early childhood education is conveying a commitment to the protection and promotion of child well-being while sustaining culture, traditional languages, and community values.

To fully understand biculturalism, it is important to distinguish it from processes of acculturation. Acculturation is defined as the process through which individuals change the attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors associated with their culture of origin and replace them with those of the mainstream society. At the extreme, acculturation involves abandoning old identities and embracing those of the dominant society. The process of acculturation has been linked to a variety of problematic situations (e.g., high-risk behaviors in adolescence such as violence and drug use) that can be attributed to a lack of connection with the culture of origin, a lack of understanding of mainstream society, and/or the absence of opportunities to interact with the dominant culture in meaningful ways. Acculturation is also associated with children's feeling as though they have little connection with their cultural origins. This lack of connection might be related to the fact that children often feel a need to belong to the dominant culture and yearn for acceptance without undue attention to cultural differences. This need for belonging is a complex issue that is enmeshed within the challenges brought on by racism, discrimination, and **poverty**, which are experienced by many immigrant, minority, and Indigenous groups. When biculturalism has been viewed from a perspective of acculturation, it has been defined as successful or additive acculturation. In general, the negative effects of extreme acculturation are not reflected in the process of biculturalization, which is linked to positive adjustment for minority children.

Biculturalism has also been analyzed from a resilience perspective. From this approach, it is maintained that "biculturalism is a resilient outcome because it implies a set of values, behaviors, and social service availability that allows positive adaptation despite the constraints given by poverty and discrimination" (Infante and Lamond, 2003, p. 169). It is often argued that some minority groups have high resilience in spite of the adversity they have faced. Some of the factors that may contribute to higher resilience might include social skills, support networks, strong family relationships and cultural attachment. This way "as the child is exposed to the acculturation or biculturalization process, the child has a strong foundation and can accept some different ways of thinking and behaving" (p. 184).

Bicultural development has also been closely linked to bilingual competence (see **bilingual education**). Language and culture are closely intertwined, and participation in a culture is accomplished in part through learning the language and thereby being able to participate in communal activities and communication practices. In the case of children, bilingualism allows them to maintain family ties and

relationships with family members, thereby providing a conduit to learn about cultural values firsthand.

Early childhood programs represent an essential institution in working toward the facilitation of a bicultural identity development for minority and Indigenous children as well as in supporting families in the bicultural development of their children. Early childhood educators could play an integral role in supporting a bicultural identity among children. By starting the process of supporting the development and well-being of minority and Indigenous children, educators could ensure that these children eventually participate more successfully in the mainstream society. While bilingual development is often recognized in training programs for early childhood practitioners, biculturalism is not widely understood or proactively supported.

To advance biculturalism, there are a number of requirements for early childhood professionals. First, a thorough understanding of bicultural development is essential—one that involves attention to issues of race, discrimination, and power. Second, a respectful understanding of the children's and families' background is highly beneficial for early childhood educators. Third, early childhood educators would benefit from a thorough understanding of the dynamics of the mainstream culture within which the program they are delivering is embedded. In other words, educators need to understand the source and significance of the values on which their programs rest and the impact that the program has on the development of biculturalism among these particular children. Fourth, early childhood practitioners need to be able to work in partnership with families so they can successfully support the needs of the family, specifically with regard to biculturalism.

In spite of the numerous challenges to supporting biculturalism in early childhood educational programs, there are successful examples both in the United States and abroad. In the United States, the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), implemented in Hawaii with Hawaiian children and on a Navajo Reservation in Arizona, provided insights into the incorporation of cultural knowledge into mainstream education. Researchers involved in this program concluded that "if children need to be educated in ways that are compatible with their cultures, then solutions to educational needs and problems need to be developed locally, with and for the different populations and communities that schools are trying to serve" (Jordan, 1995, p. 97). In Aotearoa/New Zealand, an early childhood education program (Te Whariki) has been developed with a strong commitment to the development of biculturalism (Ritchie, 2003). Through this program, Maori children are perceived as bicultural and their own cultural knowledge is validated within the broader society. The program challenges ideas of assimilation of Indigenous peoples into dominant society and allows for the development of a society that supports social justice through the acknowledgment of the importance of raising bicultural children.

Biculturalism is considered a predictor of positive adjustment and psychological well-being of immigrant and Indigenous children (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Moreover, biculturalism is an essential element of a society focused on social justice since it encourages members from minority ethnic, racial, and religious groups to preserve their own values, beliefs, traditions, ways of being;

while at the same time allowing them to become active members of the host society. As defined by the United Nation's *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, being and becoming bicultural is a basic right of children. Moreover, it is a necessity in today's global society. See also Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education.

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Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw

Bilingual Education

Bilingual education in the United States has traditionally referred to the education of children whose home language is not English. Typically, the goal of bilingual programs has been to raise the English fluency of the students to a level that will allow them to function in English language classrooms. Once they are judged to be sufficiently fluent in English (usually through a mixture of academic achievement and language fluency testing), the students are transitioned to English-only instruction. Rarely is the goal to promote high levels of proficiency in two languages, but rather to provide sufficient instruction and support that allows the child to exit from the bilingual program as quickly as possible with no ongoing support for the home language. Thus, the term bilingual education is a misnomer in light of the actual goals and program practices in most U.S. educational settings.

Currently, it is estimated that about 20 percent of the school age population in the United States speaks a language other than English at home; between 14 and 16 percent of children speak Spanish as their home language (Reyes and Moll, 2004), and another 4-6 percent speak something other than Spanish. Bilingualism, or nearly equal proficiency in two languages, has been studied and debated for decades in this country. In 1968, the Bilingual Education Act was passed, which required teachers and schools to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of children who did not speak English. This led to the proliferation of bilingual programs in

school districts, followed by many studies evaluating the effectiveness of different approaches to bilingual education. Disagreements over the value of bilingualism in the context of U.S. social policies has resulted in an English-only movement that has severely restricted bilingual education programs in some states. With the enactment of the federal **No Child Left Behind Act** in 2001, current policies emphasize the rapid acquisition of English without explicit attention to the role of the home language in long-term academic achievement. In fact several states have adopted English-only policies and many more repeatedly submit to voters English-only ballot initiatives that would require English only in all spheres of public life.

Children whose home language is not English are considered *English-language learners* (ELLs). They are also frequently described as *linguistic minority students* or more recently as *linguistically diverse students*. As children acquire a second language, one language may be more dominant because they are using that language more than the other at a particular point in time. Frequently children demonstrate a *language imbalance* as they progress toward bilingualism. During this time, children may not perform as well as native speakers in either language. This is a normal and most often temporary phase of emergent bilingualism (see **Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood**). It is rare for young children to achieve a balanced bilingualism without special assistance, but most can achieve it given sufficient exposure, opportunities, and motivation for use. For this reason, it is important to assess bilingual children on both their first language and English to monitor the progress of their bilingualism.

There are several models for early childhood bilingual education in the United States. Bilingual Education programs are generally expected to divide classroom interaction between English and the child's first/home language. However, the percentage of time actually devoted to native language versus English varies enormously depending on the language fluency of the teaching staff and the goals of the program. Bilingual programs must have at least one teacher who is fluent in the child's first language. Examples of bilingual programs include dual-language classes (which include minority-language and English-speaking children), maintenance bilingual education, transitional bilingual education, English submersion with native language and ESL support, and integrated bilingual education. The goals of such programs vary from transitioning into English as quickly as possible, maintaining and supporting home language development while simultaneously supporting English acquisition, or promoting second language development for both English speakers and non-English speakers, that is, dual language programs.

Dual language programs are increasingly found in the United States. There are a variety of terms used to describe these programs: Two-way immersion, two-way bilingual education, developmental bilingual education, and dual language education. Dual language classrooms contain an approximate balance of language minority and native English-speaking children. Both languages are used throughout the curriculum in approximately equal amounts so that all children will become bilingual and eventually biliterate and multicultural. English-language learners are expected to become proficient in their home language as well as English. Native English speakers are expected to develop language and literacy skills in a second language while making normal progress in English.

A second approach to bilingual education is through Primary/Native Language Programs. In these programs all or most interactions are in the child's first or primary language. In these settings, the teachers must be fluent in the child's home language. The goals include development and support for the child's first language with little or no systematic exposure to English during the early phases. The child's home language is used for the majority of classroom time with the justification being that the concepts, skills, and knowledge will transfer from the first language into English. The home language is promoted to support cognitive and literacy development in a language the child understands, and to preserve cultural identity. One such program—the Carpenteria Preschool Program, a Spanish language preschool in California—has been studied and evaluated to determine the long-term effects of first language instruction during the preschool years on future language and literacy skills. Researchers concluded that first language instruction during the preschool years fostered both native language and English language fluency (Campos and Rosemberg, 1995).

English Immersion is another common approach to bilingual education. Immersion simply means that students learn everything in English. The extreme case of this is described as a “sink or swim” approach to learning English. However, teachers using immersion programs generally strive to deliver lessons in simple and understandable language that allows students to internalize English while experiencing the typical educational opportunities in the preschool or kindergarten curriculum. Sometimes students are pulled out for “English as a Second Language (ESL)” programs, which provide them with instruction—again in English—geared for language acquisition. The goals of English-only classrooms include development of English, but not development or maintenance of the child's first language.

Transitional bilingual programs are increasingly the predominant model in most U.S. school-age programs. The purpose of this approach is to achieve enough English language proficiency to move quickly into the English-only mainstream. In early childhood settings, although the research is limited, there is some evidence that this model is also the most common one, particularly when multiple languages are represented in the child population and/or the primary-grade classrooms are English-only. This approach typically provides one or two years of support for the home language while children transition into English-only classrooms. The goal is to increase the use of English while decreasing the child's reliance on the home language for communication and instructional activities. Early childhood programs that explicitly use this model are presumed to be helping the child transition quickly into English and become assimilated into the majority culture. The amount of support for home language development and culture varies according to multiple program and community factors.

Historically, research on the effectiveness of bilingual education programs has produced mixed results, in part because program evaluation studies—featuring appropriate comparison groups and random assignment of subjects or controls for preexisting differences—are extremely difficult to design. Moreover, there is considerable variation among the instructional approaches, settings, children, and communities being compared in such studies. While numerous studies have documented the benefits of bilingual programs, much of this research has faced

methodological criticisms—as noted by a recent expert panel of the National Research Council (August and Hakuta, 1997).

When designing and evaluating the effectiveness of bilingual versus monolingual approaches in preschool, it is important to consider the distinctions between preschool and elementary school. During the early childhood years, children are actively acquiring a first language that will form the base for future cognitive and academic development. They are just developing the basic language skills necessary for benefiting from formal instruction; young children are also highly responsive to their social and language environment, and they are intricately embedded in their family culture, values, and language patterns. For these reasons and others, preschool is an ideal time for young children to learn two languages—their own as well as that of the dominant culture.

Recent program evaluations have tended to favor models that allow children to develop their native language skills to high levels of proficiency while they are learning English. The results of preschool program evaluations have demonstrated that native language instruction can confer long-term language and literacy advantages; and that high-quality preschool bilingual programs can promote both home language and English acquisition. In contrast, well-designed and carefully implemented English immersion programs for ELLs can lead to short-term gains in English acquisition (Rice and Wilcox, 1995), but children in these programs tended to lose their native language fluency over time (Oller and Eilers, 2002).

Recent research has linked loss of home language with poor long-term academic outcomes. R. Slavin and A. Cheung (2005) reviewed all the experimental studies on reading instruction for English language learners and concluded that teaching reading in the child's home language and English at different times of the day leads to the best reading outcomes. Thus, early instruction in both languages can promote both goals and can also be used as the foundation of a two-way bilingual program that promotes Spanish acquisition for English-only children in addition to English fluency for ELL children.

Other researchers (Oller and Eilers, 2002) have also found that for Spanish speaking children learning English, two-way education as opposed to English Immersion showed few if any long-term advantages or disadvantages with regard to language and literacy in English, but that two-way education (*dual language*) showed significant advantages for bilingual children in acquisition of language and literacy in Spanish. An unexpected finding of their research was that children who speak Spanish at home quickly come to prefer to speak in English and that by third grade, many ELL children had lost fluency in their home language.

Lily Wong Fillmore (1996) has also documented the loss of language and cultural patterns among U.S. immigrant populations. She describes the pain and personal sense of loss that she experienced as a Chinese immigrant when she lost the ability to communicate with family members and the sense of shame associated with their cultural practices.

The important point to keep in mind for young ELL children is that their home language and cultural practices are fragile and susceptible to dominance by the English language and mainstream culture. The consequences of learning

English too early without systematic support for the home language are certainly detrimental socially, culturally, and recent evidence points to negative long-term academic outcomes.

The literature on bilingual education has repeatedly reported linguistic, cognitive, metalinguistic, and early literacy advantages for children who successfully become bilingual over monolinguals. It is clear that many conceptual, literacy, and language skills transfer from the child's first language to English. However, there are many unanswered questions around the impact of social class and bilingual education for very young children who have not yet developed proficiency in their first language. When ELL children from low SES families enter our early childhood programs, what are the costs of adding English when their native language abilities are significantly delayed? How much native language fluency is necessary before adding a second language? Does this vary by individual child characteristics and the resources of the program? While there are clearly social, economic, and cultural benefits to becoming bilingual and biliterate, the research has yet to conclusively describe the methods for achieving this goal.

Nevertheless, a consensus of researchers in bilingual education and language acquisition recognizes that the following propositions have strong empirical support and implications for early childhood: Native-language instruction does not retard the acquisition of English; Well-developed skills in the child's home language are associated with high levels of long-term academic achievement; Bilingualism is a valuable skill, for individuals and for the country. *See also* Language Diversity; Literacy.

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Binet, Alfred (1857–1911)

Alfred Binet was a French psychologist who studied and researched a wide variety of topics dealing with the mental capacity of humans. His work has impacted the field of education primarily in regard to intelligence testing, albeit a small example of his contributions to general psychology. Many of his findings were anticipatory of future research in psychology. Throughout his lifetime, Binet published extensive works on topics ranging from psychophysics to creativity and launched the publication of *L'Année Psychologique*, which remains a prominent psychology journal in France today.

Alfred Binet was born in July 1857, in Nice, France. His physician father and artistic mother separated when Alfred was young and from then on his mother took responsibility for his upbringing. At fifteen years of age, he studied at the prestigious Louis-le-Grand and was rewarded for his exemplary capabilities in literary composition and translation. He studied both law and medicine, and while he held a degree in law, did not continue either vocation. In his twenties he was granted permission as a reader at the Bibliothèque Nationale, wherein he began to read about developments in psychology.

The works of both Théodule Ribot and John Stuart Mill intrigued a young Binet and piqued his interest in sensory and associationistic psychology. In the 1880s he was introduced to Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière Hospital, during which time he observed, experimented, and published extensively on hypnosis and hysteria. In defending a controversial theory and questionable experimentation, Binet gradually came to understand the effect of suggestibility on psychological experimentation.

Binet married Laure Balbiani in 1884 and their two daughters, Madeleine and Alice, were born in 1885 and 1887, respectively. Binet left the Salpêtrière in 1890 and conducted home experiments with his daughters, systematically observing their behavior and responses. His published works detailing these experiments suggest a budding interest in individual differences and measuring intelligence. Binet's test of his daughter's ability to differentiate the relative size of collections prefaced conservation studies by Jean Piaget.

Soon afterwards, Binet took a volunteer position at the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology at the Sorbonne, which led to a position as director in 1894. Along with Henry Beaunis he established the psychology journal *L'Année Psychologique* in this first year; many of his collaborative works with Théodore Simon on intelligence were published through this journal. This publication is arguably his most significant contribution to psychology.

Binet's experimental research extended to schoolchildren and Victor Henri briefly assisted him on investigations of visual memory and inquiry into individual psychology. Binet's writings reflected a growing understanding that intelligence could be measured as well as of the individual differences in intelligence. Toward the end of the century he joined La Société Libre pour l'Étude Psychologique de l'Enfant (the Free Society for the Psychological Study of the Child) and was selected to a Commission on the Education of Retarded Children by the French government in 1904. This affiliation as well as the addition of Théodore Simon to

the laboratory at the Sorbonne gave way to the development of **intelligence tests** for which he is known.

Motivated by the desire to identify deficiencies that determine mental subnormality, Binet and Simon set out to design an instrument to aid in this process. Their work culminated in a series of age-related items indicating the child's mental abilities. While Binet consistently favored classifying rather than quantifying intelligence, future uses and revisions of the original Binet-Simon intelligence tests have given rise to a number of scoring systems such as the **intelligence quotient (IQ)**.

Within his lifetime, Alfred Binet foreshadowed many modern research topics in experimental psychology. His multitudinous literary contributions offer preliminary insight into a vast array of subjects relating to the workings of the human mind. His research emphasis on the variable intelligence of children provided an initial framework for measuring and understanding the individual differences of both typically and atypically developing children.

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Sia Haralampus

Black Caucus (NAEYC)

The Black Caucus of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** was founded in 1969 during an NAEYC national conference held in Salt Lake City, Utah. Upon arrival, blacks and other people of color were openly discouraged from attending not only the conference, but also the opening session held at the Mormon Tabernacle. Four Black Board members—Evangeline Ward, the NAEYC president, Ira Gibbons, Canary Girardeau, and Carrie Cheek—approached J. D. Andrews, an NAEYC staff member, to help organize a meeting to discuss the present situation and how blacks could become more active and prominent within the organization, giving them a chance to influence decisions and make policy through the conference and throughout NAEYC's vast affiliate network.

As a result, the conference format was reorganized into committee meetings designed to discuss the treatment of citizens of color in this country who were working in the early childhood education field. NAEYC also decided that it would never again hold its conference in a city where people of color experienced such blatant discrimination, and the Black Caucus was officially formed. According to someone who attended the seminar, the Salt Lake City conference was a turning point for NAEYC to break away from its past of exclusion and begin its efforts to reach out to people of color.

Each year since its founding, the Black Caucus has met during the NAEYC annual conference and has sponsored either an event or meeting open to anyone concerned about the welfare of black children. Because of the commitment that NAEYC staff leaders Marilyn Smith and J. D. Andrews had to diversity within the organization and within the field, the Black Caucus, under their leadership, has had strong support for maintaining its identity. In addition to arranging meeting space during its annual conference, NAEYC has also been receptive to the recommendations the Caucus has made to the association.

Through the years, the Black Caucus has been concerned with issues affecting the status of African American children and African American leaders within the association and in field of early childhood education. Caucus members have weighed in on controversial topics such as Ebonics (the language of the black community), cultural dimensions of **developmentally appropriate practices**, center accreditation policies, **parent involvement**, teacher training and professional development, and **bilingual education**. The Caucus has recruited members to run for Board seats and to serve on major committees within the association. Always vigilant to represent perspectives from the black community, the Black Caucus has held many spirited meetings and each year participants look forward to the opportunity to network and meet new colleagues in the early childhood education field. The Black Caucus has also sponsored powerful and memorable conference sessions focused on the black child, drawing upon such national experts as Drs. Evangeline Ward, Barbara Bowman, Asa Hilliard and Hector Myers, Betty Shabazz, Janice Hale, Evelyn Moore, and Jack Daniel. The Black Caucus has also served as a study and support group for blacks in this field. It has provided not only a community of support to these individuals but has also been responsible for the development of leadership in black educators and members of the organization.

A chairman who is selected by the group and serves for a term averaging from three to five years leads the Black Caucus. Past chairmen have included Canary Girardeau, Carrie Cheek, Barbara Ferguson Kamara, Dwayne A. Crompton, Carol Brunson (Phillips) Day, Gayle Cunningham, Marci Young, and Shyrelle Eubanks.

In 2000, the Black Caucus became known as the NAEYC Black Caucus Interest Group. In addition to holding its annual gathering, the organization has also begun to participate with several other NAEYC interest groups in a celebration of diversity. Beginning in 2002, the Black Caucus Interest Group began presenting a Leadership for Children Award for excellence in serving children and families. Dwayne A. Crompton, Edward M. Greene, Barbara Bowman and Carol Brunson Day are past recipients of the award.

Carol Brunson Day

Blow, Susan Elizabeth (1843–1916)

Susan Elizabeth Blow was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1843 and is credited with establishing the first public, continuous kindergarten in the United States. Known as the “Mother of the Kindergarten,” Blow was recognized by her father for her intelligence and was supported by him throughout her life. She served as his secretary when he was Ambassador to Brazil and accompanied him on a tour

of Europe in 1871. During that tour she was impressed by her observations of German kindergartens established by Friedrich **Froebel**. Trained in New York as a teacher at Miss Henrietta Haines's private school, Blow was eager to return to St. Louis and establish a similar program for young children in the United States.

Blow used her family's influence to convince the Superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools to open a **kindergarten**, based on the theory and practice of Frederick Froebel, in the new Des Peres Elementary School. That first kindergarten class in St. Louis met in the mornings during the 1873-1874 school year, with sixty-eight children, one paid teacher, and three volunteers. Blow made sure the tables and benches from the Froebel kindergartens that she had seen in Europe were duplicated for the classrooms in St. Louis. The reports of the first kindergarten classrooms indicated that children were better prepared to enter regular elementary school if they participated in the program run by Susan Blow. More kindergarten classrooms were added and a teacher training program was implemented to help prepare kindergarten teachers for St. Louis Public Schools and for schools across the United States.

Susan Blow soon returned to Miss Haines's school in New York to study with Maria Boelte, a teacher who had studied under Froebel, and brought his philosophy and ideas to her work at Haines's school. In 1885, Blow began taking her kindergarten method to other parts of the United States and into other countries. A special teaching certification was developed and issued by the St. Louis Public Schools for teachers completing the kindergarten training program. Teachers came from all over the United States to train with Blow and returned to their towns to establish kindergarten programs.

By 1884, in poor health with Graves Disease, Susan Blow left St. Louis to recuperate in Cazenovia, New York. In her later life, she wrote five books to discuss Froebel's work and its application to the kindergartens she established in the United States. She continued her work as a member of the Advisory Board of the International Kindergarten Union and a lecturer on contemporary Kindergarten thought. She began lecturing at Columbia Teacher's College in 1898, continuing until within three weeks of her death in 1916.

The Carondelt Historical Center in St. Louis, Missouri, maintains the Des Peres Elementary School as a museum featuring a kindergarten classroom with replicas of the benches, tables, and materials used to teach children enrolled in the kindergarten classes of 1873. Families donated samples of materials that their relatives created as students in the kindergartens directed by Susan Blow, including needle work, folded paper, and notebooks of children's work. All twenty of the "gifts" in Froebel's theory for the education of young children are represented in the display cases at the museum. In addition, diaries of Susan Blow and workbooks from apprentice teachers are displayed. There are also two stained glass windows, one of Froebel and one of Blow, originally made for display in the nearby Shepard Elementary School. Several of the schools used today still have evidence of the large rooms intended for use as kindergartens, proportioned to accommodate the large wooden tables that Blow had built for the classrooms. Wilkinson Elementary, built in 1922, has the original stained glass created to identify the kindergarten classrooms.

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Susan Catapano

Bowlby, John (1907–1990)

John Bowlby is widely considered to be the “father” of **attachment** theory. In a lifetime devoted to understanding the importance of the relationship between the child and his or her primary caregiver, Bowlby developed a theory that has generated more research and writing than any other topic in the socioemotional realm. An important later development to the theory of relevance to early childhood educators was the recognition that children also develop attachments to adults other than the parent, particularly to day-care providers, early childhood teachers, and others with whom they spend time.

John Mostyn Bowlby was born in London in 1907, the fourth of six children. He was raised by a beloved nanny, which was the custom in upper-middle-class England at the time, but she left the family just before young John turned four. As was also typical, he was sent to boarding school at age 7, and it was very difficult for him. Undoubtedly these two experiences affected him deeply and influenced his interest in separation and loss.

Bowlby attended the University of Cambridge in 1928 where he studied what we now call developmental psychology. Just after graduating, he volunteered at a school for “maladjusted” children, and he began to watch them closely and with great interest. It is likely as a result of these experiences that Bowlby set about to become a child psychiatrist. In addition to studying medicine and psychiatry, he was trained as a child psychoanalyst by Melanie Klein at the British Psychoanalytic Institute. While Klein’s training greatly influenced Bowlby, he parted ways with her theory in its interpretation of family interactions as not particularly important to understanding the child. Instead, Bowlby began to recognize the primary relationship between the child and caregiver, namely the mother. In 1938, Bowlby married Ursula Longstaff, and over the course of the next decade he fathered four children. In 1945, following World War II, he became head of the Children’s Department at the Tavistock Clinic, where children with serious emotional problems were treated. There, he began to focus on the parent–child relationship in both healthy and pathological circumstances. At Tavistock, Bowlby was greatly influenced by James Robertson, who helped him closely observe and film the behavior of children who had been separated from their parents due to hospitalization.

In 1950, Bowlby was asked by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** to examine the mental health of children who had been orphaned by World War II. This gave him a chance to gather all information available and, importantly, to talk with other experts on this topic. He was influenced by the work of Konrad Lorenz, Robert Hinde, and their field of ethology, which emphasized the existence of critical periods in development. By bringing together information

about child development, psychoanalysis, and ethology, Bowlby's report to the WHO set forth the primary thesis of attachment theory. The report was so influential that it was eventually translated into 14 languages and sold 400,000 copies in its initial edition. While the language of the report was still very psychoanalytic in origin, Bowlby's main conclusion set the course of attachment theory: "What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother-substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment" (Bowlby, 1969, p. xi). Later, Bowlby was joined by other influential colleagues, notably Mary (Salter) Ainsworth, who traveled to Uganda to observe children's separations and reunions from caregivers in naturalistic settings. Her Uganda research led to the development of reliable ways to measure the attachment relationship, an essential step to conducting empirical research. Bowlby's ability to learn from others and to collaborate with them, particularly others from a wide array of professional disciplines, was notable and gave him the broad perspective that led to a remarkably generative theory.

Bowlby presented his first work on attachment theory in the late 1950s and early 1960s to the British Psychoanalytic Society in London in three papers that have become classics in the field: "The nature of the child's tie to his mother," "Separation anxiety," and "Grief and mourning in infancy and early childhood." These were followed by significant research by Bowlby and colleagues and resulted in Bowlby's enormously influential three-volume series: *Attachment* (Bowlby, 1969), *Separation* (Bowlby, 1973), and *Loss* (Bowlby, 1980).

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Martha Pott

Bronfenbrenner, Urie (1917–2005)

Urie Bronfenbrenner is widely regarded as one of the world's leading scholars in developmental psychology, child-rearing, and the **ecology of human development**. He spent most of his professional career at Cornell University, where he was the Jacob Gould Sherman Professor of Human Development and of Psychology. Born in Moscow, Russia, in 1917, Bronfenbrenner came to the United States at the age of six. After graduating from high school in Haverstraw, New York, he received a bachelor's degree from Cornell in 1938, completing a double major in psychology

and music. He went on to do graduate work in developmental psychology, completing an M.A. at Harvard followed by a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in 1942. The day after receiving his doctorate he was inducted into the Army where he served as a psychologist in the Air Corps and the Office of Strategic Services. Following demobilization, he served briefly as the Assistant Chief Clinical Psychologist for Research in the new VA Clinical Psychology Training Program, and then did a two-year stint as an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Michigan. He joined the Cornell faculty in 1948.

From the very beginning of his scholarly work, Bronfenbrenner pursued three mutually reinforcing themes: (1) developing theory and research designs at the frontiers of developmental science; (2) laying out the implications and applications of developmental research for policy and practice; and (3) communicating—through articles, lectures, and discussions—the findings of developmental research to students, to the general public, and to policymakers, both in the private and public sector.

Bronfenbrenner's 1979 book, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, was hailed as groundbreaking, establishing his place at the forefront of developmental psychology. His ecological theory, and his ability to translate it into operational research models and effective social policies, contributed to the creation of **Head Start**, the federal child development program for low-income children and their families.

Bronfenbrenner's theoretical model transformed the way many social and behavioral scientists approached the study of human beings and their environments. His starting point was the observation that historically the study of early development had been conducted "out of context," that is, in the laboratory rather than in the environments within which children grow and develop (what he called the study of the strange behavior of children in strange situations with strange adults for the briefest period of time). He maintained that development needs to be understood in ecological context, as "the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between those settings, and by the larger contexts in which those settings are embedded."

Bronfenbrenner pointed out that the environments shaping development can be specified as systems, and that the properties of those systems can be identified. In his 1979 book he laid out four systems levels, conceived as nested, one within the next, like a set of Russian dolls: *microsystems* (patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the child directly); *mesosystems* (the interrelations between two or more such microsettings); *exosystems* (settings that affect or are affected by the developing child, but do not involve the child as an active participant); and *macrosystems* (the beliefs and values found at the level of culture, society, or subculture that manifest themselves as consistencies in the form and content of the other three environmental systems—the "blueprint," so to speak). Bronfenbrenner understood that a complete understanding of societal characteristics and dynamics requires comparison with other societies, which he pursued through extensive cross-cultural ecosystem comparison. His *Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S. and U.S.S.R.*, written in 1970 at the height of the

Cold War, provided unique insights into the ways that societal values are (or are not) transferred from one generation to the next. (For more on the ecology of human development perspective, see that entry.)

As a developmental psychologist Bronfenbrenner was as interested in the changing nature of the developing person as he was in the environmental systems that shape that development. In his view the developing person, through maturation and interactive experience, becomes increasingly capable of altering the environmental "niche" that it occupies. Thus Bronfenbrenner's theoretical perspective was "optimistic," in the sense that it included a belief in the power of influence by the developing person to modify the surrounding environment through active engagement and increasing personal control. In his view the social structural forces of society (class, gender, race, socioeconomic status) were not immutable in shaping individual destinies, but could be modified to some extent by developmentally competent persons. Richard Lerner points out that this optimism was manifest in Bronfenbrenner's conviction, based on scientific evidence, that "applications of developmental science may improve the course and contexts of human life."

Later in his career, Bronfenbrenner extended his ecological theory, adding the prefix "bio" to "ecological" in recognition of his long-held view that biological resources are important to understanding human development. But for him, biological potential was just that—potential. Whether it was brought to fruition depended on the presence of environmental systems that promoted enduring, reciprocal, highly interactive processes between a developing organism and other individuals or objects in the environment.

Bronfenbrenner has had and continues to have considerable influence within the field of early childhood education, both within the United States and abroad. His emphasis on the power of reciprocal relations (adult-child, child-child) as the "engines" of development reinforces much previous and contemporary theory and practice in early childhood education. In an influential paper written in 1976 for the Office of Child Development of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, he documented the importance of an explicit emphasis on the parent-child dyad in the design of **early intervention** programs, thereby shifting the programmatic focus beyond the individual child to include the parent or other significant adult. This insight, supported with empirical evidence, underscored the general importance of parent involvement in early education programs, and anticipated the shift to "two-generation" programming that has increasingly become the norm in the twenty-first century (**Early Head Start** is a prime example). Perhaps his most unique and enduring contribution to the field has been in helping policy-makers, practitioners, and academics track the ways that public policies developed and implemented at the national or state level shape the major institutions of society (work-places, schools, child-care settings) to affect the development of children through interactions with significant adults and peers.

Bronfenbrenner's active involvement with public policy in early childhood was during a twenty-year period between 1965 and 1985, beginning with his service on the National Planning Committee for Project Head Start. He worked closely with staff of the national Office of Child Development (including Dr. Edward Zigler) during the 1970s, and was an advisor to Senator and then

Vice-President Walter Mondale throughout that decade. In the late 1970s and early 1980s Bronfenbrenner codirected the Family Matters Project (with Moncrieff Cochran and William Cross Jr.), a five-country longitudinal study of stresses and supports in the lives of families that included (in the United States) development, implementation, and evaluation of a family support program (home visiting and peer support). The findings from that effort to understand and augment natural helping systems in the lives of American families helped to shape the national family support movement.

In his later years Urie Bronfenbrenner spoke and wrote often of his fear that the processes central to healthy human development are breaking down as disruptive economic and social trends in American society bring insecurity and violence into the lives of America's families and children. "The hectic pace of modern life poses a threat to our children second only to poverty and unemployment," he said. "We are depriving millions of children—and thereby our country—of their birthright . . . virtues, such as honesty, responsibility, integrity and compassion." The gravity of the crisis, he warned, threatens the competence and character of the next generation of adults—those destined to be the first leaders of the twenty-first century. "The signs of this breakdown are all around us in the ever growing rates of alienation, apathy, rebellion, delinquency and violence among American youth," he wrote. Yet, he added: "It is still possible to avoid that fate. We now know what it takes to enable families to work the magic that only they can perform. The question is, are we willing to make the sacrifices and the investment necessary to enable them to do so?"

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Moncrieff Cochran and Stephen Ceci

Bruner, Jerome (1915–)

Jerome Bruner is a cognitive psychologist who has been a major influence on educational theory and practice for over half a century. As one of the key figures in the "cognitive revolution" of the 1950s, Bruner was one of the first interpreters of Lev Vygotsky's work in the United States and Western Europe. More recently he has become critical of the direction educational theory and practice has taken since the cognitive revolution of the 1950s and he now espouses a cultural view of education (1996). His interest and influence go well beyond psychology into the humanities and law.

Bruner was born in 1915 in New York City and at the age of two he had an eye surgery to correct a vision impairment. His early years were marked by frequent moves, often changing schools. In 1937, he received a B.A. degree from Duke University and in 1941 was awarded a Ph.D. in Psychology at Harvard, where he eventually served as a professor of psychology (1952-1972). He served on the President's Science Advisory Committee during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and was instrumental in the development of the **Head Start** program. He moved to England in 1972 as the Watts Professor of Psychology at Oxford University (1972-1980). Bruner has had numerous academic positions, the most recent of which is as a senior research fellow at the New York University School of Law.

Bruner's long career runs parallel to the evolution of cognitive psychology and education in the second half of the twentieth century and remains at the center of progressive education at the beginning of the twenty-first. He began his career studying the mechanisms of thought and learning. In the 1950s, he was at the forefront of the effort to establish cognitive psychology as an alternative to the mechanistic approaches suggested by behaviorism. Indeed, throughout his career Bruner has been concerned with meaning making. This began with a research program describing the mental processes involved in cognition (e.g., spatial awareness, abstract reasoning). This focus on the active processes in the development of thinking marks Bruner as one of the earliest constructivists. The child is an active contributor to the development of his thinking, and as with Jean **Piaget**, the starting place for learning is with the processes that the child has built to that point in development. According to this view, construction of individual mental abilities is done in active encounters with the real world. Such active learning is a central theme guiding contemporary U.S. perspectives on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education.

In the 1960s, Bruner (1966) brought his work on cognition directly into the discussion of educational practice (*Toward A Theory of Instruction*). In this and other works, he encourages teachers to help children build upon their current knowledge through the discovery of principles that underlie an understanding of the physical and social world. He recommends curriculum that is organized in a spiral, in which understandings are built upon what the child currently knows. In line with these views are principles of instruction that take into account the characteristics of the children and that are focused on engaging them in a process of discovery.

In the 1970s, Bruner began examining the role of scaffolding in the learning process. With David Wood and Gail Ross he examined how adults support children in problem-solving tasks. This notion of scaffolding has become a central concept in contemporary discussions of social constructivist theory as well as the early childhood curriculum (Berk and Winsler, 1995). Bruner's work on early language acquisition, also initiated in the 1970s, examines the social environment that leads to meaningful communication. That is, for Bruner, the use of language is not simply the result of an inborn language acquisition device but requires interactions with key people in which it becomes functional. As with his earlier work on mental processes, the emphasis is on active meaning-making in a practical context.

Bruner's criticism of the cognitive revolution is articulated in *Acts of Meaning* (1990), in which he describes how inquiry into how children create meaning was supplanted in psychological and educational research by a mechanistic effort to describe how information is processed. In this and subsequent work he outlines the role of culture in providing a framework for meaning-making as well as children's use of **narrative** as a means of organizing their understandings of the world and their place in the world. He expands on this central role for narrative in *The Culture of Education* (1996) and describes schools as places where culture is transmitted and created.

The broad range of Bruner's work touches on many aspects of early childhood education. In the analysis of specific instructional strategies, he has helped articulate the notions of discovery learning and scaffolding. His emphasis on the pragmatic aspects of early language learning has informed the current discussion of early literacy. His influence is acknowledged among progressive early childhood programs internationally, including those of **Reggio Emilia**. In the broader arena of educational practice he has asked for a re-evaluation of education systems that test for fragmented knowledge rather than the construction of meaning. In the area of public policy, he has more recently engaged in a critique of the national **No Child Left Behind Act**. See also Development, Language, Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood.

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John Hornstein

Bullying

Bullying is a type of relational aggression directed intentionally against an individual by one or more other individuals. Bullying behavior has been documented in cultures around the world, though there is evidence that it may be more prevalent in some countries than in others. In one survey of American high-school students, over 60 percent reported that they had, at some time in their school career, been a victim of bullying. Similar percentages have been reported in studies from Europe and Asia. Despite the prevalence of bullying, there is no single agreed-upon definition of the phenomenon. Some scholars emphasize that bullying should be defined as *repeated* aggression directed toward an individual (Olweus, 1993), others emphasize the malicious *intent* of perpetrators as the most important component of bullying (Randall, 1997; Tattum and Tattum, 1992), while other scholars highlight the role that imbalances of *power* and *social position* play in bullying (Smith and Sharp, 1994). Bullying can encompass a range of behaviors including physical, verbal, and psychological aggression. Bullying may be overt (e.g., physical or verbal aggression) or covert (e.g., social aggression).

Bullying in Developmental Perspective

Aggression, like other aspects of children's socioemotional development, passes through various developmental stages. A developmental examination of bullying must also recognize that its development is dependent on linguistic, cognitive, and socioemotional development. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that all development occurs within the context of culture and hence, definitions and manifestations of bullying vary among cultures.

The earliest signs of aggressive behavior have been documented in children as young as seven months of age. From 18 months until 2 years, there is an increase in the frequency of children's aggressive behavior. As children's linguistic development progresses, they increasingly use verbal means to negotiate social tension, and, consequently, name-calling becomes the most frequent form of bullying behavior that has been documented in young children. There is a concomitant decrease in physical aggression.

Between the ages of 3 and 5, there is a marked decrease in the percentage of physical aggression, combined with an increase in the amount of time that children are able to socially interact without physical or verbal aggression. During these years, children may go through a period of what some scholars call "potty mouth": deliberate use of taboo language in order to provoke a reaction from recipients. Specialists in language development view this phase as an outcome of children's pragmatic development as children gain the insight that language can be wielded in the service of power. In fact, young children may not know the meaning of the taboo words they utter, but they do recognize that they are powerful and provocative. As children begin to internalize their culture's social norms, bullying becomes more covert and children may attempt to hide their bullying behavior from adults in their environment.

In the preschool years, children's teasing and name-calling reflects the developmental concerns common to children of this age: control of emotions, bodily functions, and adherence to gender normative behaviors. In the United States, the most common names that young children use to tease each other (e.g., *poo-poo head*, *crybaby*, and *baby*) reflect these developmental concerns. It is rare in the preschool years for children to use language that is overtly linked to social ideologies such as sexism, racism, or homophobia. However, as children internalize the attitudes of their culture, their name-calling comes to reflect the norms and values of the broader culture. For example, in America, where fat is highly stigmatized, it has been documented that children as young as eight will use "fat" as a slur when bullying other children.

In middle childhood, there is a marked increase in the frequency of bullying. This may be due to the fact that, in middle school, peer relationships become increasingly central to preadolescents and bullying may play a central role in establishing and negotiating social hierarchies in the middle school (Pellegrini, 2002). It is during the middle-school years that "social category names" (e.g., *geek*, *dork*, *nerd*, *stoner*, etc.) become frequently used. Use of such slurs serves two purposes: (1) it defines *oneself* by defining *others* and (2), it establishes a sense of group membership and group norms. It is during the middle-school years as well that the use of racist, sexist, and homophobic slurs increases. Indeed, studies

of American middle-school children suggest that sexist (e.g., *bitch*, *slut*) and homophobic (e.g., *fag*, *queer*, *homo*) are the most frequent verbal taunts used by middle-school children. These gender-related slurs serve multiple functions: they enforce normative gender behavior while simultaneously stigmatizing perceived infractions of gender norms.

Though bullying behaviors can persist into adulthood (Moffitt, 1993; Randall, 1997), by the time most children reach late adolescence, the amount of bullying decreases sharply when compared to middle school. Bullying becomes less socially acceptable to older adolescents, and it may become more covert.

Gender Differences in Bullying

Although both boys and girls bully, research suggests that they do so in gender-specific ways. Research supports the idea that boys are, on the whole, more aggressive than girls, independent of other variables such as culture and socioeconomic status. Moreover, boys are more likely than girls to engage in physical aggression. Recent scholarship focusing on girls' bullying has found that girls are more likely to engage in social aggression: aggression where the intent is to cause harm to another's self-esteem or social standing.

Implications for Early Childhood Educators

Bullying occurs most often in school contexts, especially at times and in locations where there is minimal adult supervision (e.g., during recess or in the lunchroom). Teachers and other school personnel, therefore, are in a unique position to combat bullying. Scholars and educators (see Olweus, 1993) generally agree that effective antibullying policies must work on multiple levels: school-wide, within individual classrooms, and amongst individual students (both children who bully and those who are bullied). School-wide actions might include the formulation and dissemination of explicit policies and codes of behavior on bullying that delimit the bounds of appropriate language use by students and teachers, and set up clear and unambiguous consequences for infractions. At the classroom level, teachers must be trained to recognize bullying behavior and they must be equipped with the skills needed to intervene effectively. On the level of individuals, educators stress the importance of avoiding labels such as "*bully*" or "*victim*" inasmuch as most children can and do play both roles at some time in their social interactions. Any intervention must involve the child (or children) who bully, as well as the child who is the recipient of bullying. Students themselves must be provided with the social and linguistic tools to intervene in bullying behavior, especially if they are not directly involved; research suggests that by-standers who witness bullying feel as much anxiety as those who are the victims of bullying. If schools establish a clear set of policies and procedures, the incidence of bullying can be dramatically decreased. *See also* Development, Language; Peer Culture; Peers and Friends.

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Calvin Gidney

C

Carolina Abecedarian Project. *See* Abecedarian Program

CCDF. *See* Child Care and Development Fund

CCW. *See* Center for the Child Care Workforce

CDA. *See* Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program

CDF. *See* Children's Defense Fund

CDGM. *See* Child Development Group of Mississippi

CEC. *See* Council for Exceptional Children

Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW)

The Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) is a nonprofit research, education, and advocacy organization committed to improving early childhood education quality by upgrading the compensation, working conditions, and training of teaching and care-giving professionals. The Center is now a project of the American Federation of Teachers Educational Foundation (CCW/AFTEF).

CCW was founded in 1978 in Berkeley, California, as the Child Care Employee Project (CCEP). Formed by a group of preschool teachers concerned about the poor compensation and low status characteristic of their profession, CCEP began conducting independent research on the early childhood education workforce, building a national network of peers with similar concerns, and developing research, policy, and organizing resources for the field. The organization moved its headquarters to Washington, DC, in 1994, and became the Center for the Child Care Workforce in 1997. In 2002, CCW merged with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the nation's largest growing union of professionals representing pre-K-12 grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel;

higher education faculty and professional staff; nurses, and healthcare workers; and federal, state, and local government employees.

The group's landmark research project, *The National Child Care Staffing Study* (1989), was the first to document the status of the early childhood education workforce nationwide, and established a clear link between the quality of care and education that young children receive and the compensation and stability of their teachers. Other key research includes *Then and Now: Changes in Child Care Staffing, 1994–2000*, the first longitudinal study of staffing and stability in child-care centers.

Several publications and training models developed by CCW are now widely used by educators, advocates, and others in the field to enhance the leadership and organizing skills of early childhood education practitioners. *Taking on Turnover* offers strategies for improving child-care center staff retention; *Creating Better Child Care Jobs* provides an assessment framework for home-based and center-based programs on the quality of the adult work environment. CCW's *Leadership Empowerment Action Project (LEAP)* model has been replicated in communities across the country, helping front-line teaching staff work more effectively for improvements in compensation and working conditions.

From 1991 to 1999, CCW served as national coordinator of the **Worthy Wage Campaign**, a national grassroots effort to empower the workforce itself to press for staffing solutions. The campaign was instrumental in raising public awareness of early childhood education workforce issues and promoting activism, policy initiatives and legislative activity at the federal, state and local levels. CCW has also been instrumental in developing solutions to problems in the field, cofounding the California Early Childhood Mentor Program in 1988, and creating the California CARES model, an initiative that provides stipends to early childhood educators who make a commitment to staying in the field by pursuing professional development.

As a project of the AFTEF, CCW/AFTEF has broadened the scope of its public policy work by establishing a new link between early childhood educators and teachers in elementary and secondary schools. For more information, visit www.ccw.org.

Dori Mornan and Marci Young

Cerebral Palsy (CP)

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a term used to describe a group of chronic disorders that impair control of movement. The term can describe impairment such as paralysis, weakness, loss of coordination, or functional abnormality of the motor system due to brain pathology. This disorder was initially known as Little's Disease after an English surgeon John Little from the nineteenth century. Winthrop Phelps, M.D, later coined "cerebral palsy" and in 1937 founded the first treatment facility in the United States (located in Baltimore, MD) dedicated to children with CP. Presently, the center is known as the Kennedy Krieger Institute.

Data from the National Health Interview Survey—Child Health Supplement (1988) reports that 23 of 10,000 children seventeen years of age and under had CP

within the United States. In recent figures, the prevalence rate of CP remains the same, occurring in 2–2.5 per 1,000 live births, which makes it the most common severe physical disability affecting children. Disabilities ranging from CP as well as other learning disabilities have a substantial impact on the educational and health functioning of the individual children. These children have 1.5 times more doctor visits, 3.5 times more hospital days, twice the number of missed school days, and an increased likelihood of repeating a grade in school in comparison to children without these conditions (Boyle, Decoufle, and Yeargin-Allsopp, 1994).

There are three types of CP identified by the type of movement problems: spastic, athetoid, and ataxic. Spastic CP accounts for 70–80 percent of the cases in the United States. A child with spastic CP can have stiff muscles or may be unable to relax his muscles. Athetoid CP accounts for 10–20 percent of all CP cases. With this type, children have difficulty controlling the muscles of the body. Ataxic CP accounts for 5–10 percent of all cases within the country. A child with ataxic cerebral palsy has problems with balance and coordination. The various cases can also be broken down according to the body part involved: hemiplegia, diplegia, and quadriplegia. Hemiplegia is a type of CP that affects one arm and one leg on the same side of the body. Diplegia, on the other hand, primarily involves reduced functionality in both legs. Quadriplegia refers to CP that affects all four extremities as well as the trunk and neck muscles.

CP can be congenital as a result of either pre- or perinatal trauma and injury or acquired after birth. Certain causes of CP are preventable or treatable, such as head injury, contraction of rubella (German measles) by the pregnant mother, Rh incompatibility, meningitis, or jaundice. Although symptoms can change over time, CP is not a progressive disorder that increases impairment within the child over time. Different symptoms of CP will arise dependent upon the part of the brain that has been injured. Children diagnosed with CP may demonstrate a variety of symptoms such as difficulty with fine motor tasks (e.g., writing), difficulty maintaining balance or walking, and involuntary movements. The early signs of CP appear usually before the age of three. Often, physicians can diagnose a child by eighteen months due to lags in attaining developmental milestones. Infants with this disability can be slow to attain developmental milestones such as rolling over, sitting, crawling, smiling, or walking.

There is currently no cure for CP. However, treatment can improve the individual's quality of life. Treatment can include: physical therapy and occupational therapy to improve the individual's motor coordination and balance; medication to help reduce spasms and involuntary muscle movements; surgeries; and braces to increase functionality in the family, school, and work settings. Many state- and federally funded programs are in place to improve the lives of children with disabilities. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, and the Americans with Disabilities Act are in place to guarantee that Americans with disabilities will not face discrimination in receiving federal financial assistance in schools, workplace, and in other public settings.

States are required to provide assistance for families who take responsibility for children with CP. For children up to the age of three, **early intervention** provides assistance to families. Staff work with the family to develop an **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** to describe the child's individual needs and the services

the child will receive in order to address those needs. For school-aged children, special education services will be provided through the school system. The staff will work with the family to formulate an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** to meet the needs of the child. In addition to therapy services, children with CP may need assistive technology (e.g., communication devices or computer technology) to improve quality of life. Early childhood educators can play a critical role in creating a supportive, inclusive environment for children with CP. By catering to the child's individual needs, educators and family can collaborate to provide both an appropriate learning and social environment conducive to productivity.

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Sonia Susan Issac

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem that affects millions of children throughout the United States. Early childhood educators are concerned about child abuse and neglect because they are committed to nurturing the healthy development of children and to helping prevent problems that can impede a child's ability to fulfill his or her potential. Very young children—a growing number of whom spend significant time in early education and child-care settings—are the most vulnerable to the damaging impact of maltreatment. Early childhood professionals are uniquely well positioned to build relationships with parents and other caregivers, to observe and respond to problems that can place children at risk of maltreatment, and to help families before abuse or neglect occurs. In addition, individuals who work directly with children, including teachers and other staff members in early education programs, are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect (see Child Abuse and Neglect, Prevention of). Survey research indicates that awareness of the problem of child maltreatment among early childhood professionals has increased dramatically from 10 percent in the mid-1970s to more than 90 percent today.

Definition

Federal legislation—specifically the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003—defines child abuse and neglect as follows:

- Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in death, serious physical, or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation.
- An act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

Each state establishes its own, more specific definition of maltreatment that generally includes standards for physical abuse (e.g., injury caused by hitting, kicking, shaking), sexual abuse (e.g., fondling, indecent exposure, incest, rape), emotional abuse (e.g., behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth), and neglect (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter, medical treatment, or supervision). (National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information).

Scope of the Problem

In 2003, across the United States, child protective services—the public agencies responsible for responding to child abuse and neglect—received 2.9 million reports alleging abuse or neglect involving 5.5 million children. One-third of the reports were “screened out” because they did not meet a state’s standard for maltreatment. State and local child protective services agencies conducted an investigation or assessment on two-thirds of the total number of reports received, and, based on these investigations, 906,000 children were determined to be victims of abuse and neglect in 2003. (This figure represents approximately 1.2 percent of the total population of children in the United States, which was 73,043,506 in 2003.) Fifteen percent of children who are found to be abused or neglected are removed from their homes and placed in foster care (U.S. Department of Health, 2005).

The rate of victimization per 1,000 children in the national population has dropped from 13.4 children in 1990 to 12.4 children in 2003. Neglect is the most common form of maltreatment constituting 60 percent of substantiated cases, followed by physical abuse (almost 20%), sexual abuse (10%), and emotional abuse (10%). Parents or other caretakers are most frequently the perpetrators of maltreatment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

Abuse and neglect occurs within all racial and ethnic groups: half of all victims are white; one-quarter are African American; and one-tenth are Hispanic. Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaskan Native, and African American children have the highest rates of victimization. Girls are slightly more likely to be victims (51.7%) than boys (48.3%) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

Victimization is inversely related to age. The youngest children are more likely to be abused and neglected and also suffer the greatest consequences in terms of injuries and fatalities. Children from birth to five years constitute 41 percent of victims of maltreatment. More than three-quarters of the 1,500 children who died from abuse and neglect in 2003 were younger than four years (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

Because of the high volume of reports, high staff turnover, and large caseloads, many child-welfare systems struggle to respond to many families’ needs and are often criticized for failing to keep children safe. Because of the number of reports that are screened out, cases that are unsubstantiated, and lack of resources, the majority of families reported for abuse and neglect do not receive services. Many child-welfare systems are trying to improve their ability to assess and serve families and are building partnerships with community organizations in an effort to provide higher quality services to children.

Impact of Maltreatment

Many research studies document the negative impact of abuse and neglect on children, including long-term harm to children's physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development. Maltreatment has also been associated with increased risk for poor school performance and learning difficulties, drug and alcohol problems, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminality. For example, the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study reveals a powerful relationship between a traumatic experience in childhood (such as abuse) and physical and mental health problems in adulthood. New brain-imaging techniques reveal that child abuse can cause permanent changes to the neural structure and function of the developing brain. Beyond the individual hardships that result from maltreatment, child abuse, and neglect takes an enormous toll on society as a whole in terms of the tremendous costs associated with expenditures on child welfare, health, mental health, special education, and criminal justice systems, as well as lost wages.

Not all children who are abused or neglected experience these negative outcomes. Many children and families are resilient despite difficult circumstances. For example, children who have been maltreated are five times more likely than nonmaltreated children to become abusive or neglectful parents when they grow up. However, the majority of abused/neglected children, 70 percent, do *not* maltreat their children when they become parents. Research has shown that the presence of a caring adult who is responsive to a child's needs can help mitigate the effects of maltreatment and other problems.

Risk Factors

The causes of child maltreatment are complex. Current ecological theories posit that a mix of factors related to the individual child, family, community, and social context can increase or decrease the risk of abuse or neglect. Children with disabilities or special needs, for example, are more likely to be abused. Family characteristics that are linked with child maltreatment include mental health problems, isolation, substance abuse, domestic violence, and lack of parenting skills. Community-level variables that are linked with maltreatment include **poverty**, which is linked particularly to neglect, as well as high levels of unemployment and violence.

Protective Factors

Through close involvement with young children and frequent contact with parents and other caregivers, early childhood programs can effectively incorporate strategies that promote protective factors in families and guard against maltreatment. Key protective factors include (1) increasing parental resilience, (2) building the social connections of parents, (3) increasing knowledge of parenting and child development, (4) providing concrete support in times of need, and (5) supporting the social and emotional development of children (Horton, 2005).

Responses to Child Abuse and Neglect

Responses to child maltreatment are characterized as forms of primary prevention, **early intervention**, and, in extreme cases, early intervention and protection. Primary prevention is associated with large scale-efforts aimed at a broad, general audience that seek to raise public awareness and understanding of child abuse and neglect such as public education campaigns (e.g., public service announcements); information provided to all new parents (e.g., materials advising parents never to shake a baby or the “Back to Sleep” campaign), education programs for children (e.g., Safe Touch programs to prevent sexual abuse); and a range of community-based, early education, and social services programs that provide a variety of resources and supports to families.

Early intervention refers to those programs and services that target groups at risk of abuse or neglect such as home visiting programs, parenting classes, self-help groups, and supports for teenage parents. Long-term research studies of the Nurse Family Partnership (a home visiting program that targets low-income, first-time mothers) and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (an enriched early childhood program with services and supports for parents) are two examples of programs that have proven effective in preventing abuse and neglect. Some researchers also point to the small decline in child victimization rates as encouraging evidence that early intervention and prevention efforts may be having an impact on child abuse and neglect.

Child Protection and Treatment Programs respond to abuse and neglect once it is reported, such as public child protection agencies charged with investigating and responding to allegations of abuse and neglect; child welfare agencies provide family preservation, case management, and foster care services; family and criminal courts handle the legal issues that result from maltreatment; child advocacy centers streamline the interview and evidence-collecting process and provide support to victims and their families; and mental health services such as programs that provide treatment to children who have witnessed violence and help families cope with the aftermath of maltreatment. *See also* Child Abuse and Neglect, Prevention of; Domestic Violence.

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Francie Zimmerman

Child Abuse and Neglect, Prevention of

Early childhood professionals and programs play an important role in preventing—not just reporting—**child abuse and neglect**. Most child abuse is perpetrated by family members (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003); much less frequently, abuse also occurs in out-of-home settings such as schools, child-care settings, foster care, or organized youth activities. The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**—the nation’s largest organization of early childhood professionals and others dedicated to improving the quality of early childhood programs—clearly outlines in numerous publications early childhood programs’ and professionals’ roles, responsibilities, and strategies to prevent abuse and neglect both in early childhood settings and in the home. Early childhood programs and professionals are advised to undertake the six actions described below.

1. *Promote standards of excellence for early childhood programs.* High-quality care and education helps to strengthen families and promote healthy social and emotional development, as well as preparing children for later school success. Programs should use developmentally appropriate practices and pursue NAEYC accreditation, which requires a rigorous self-study process and an independent external assessment to determine whether high standards are met. Early childhood professionals should also inform the public about the need for and benefits of high-quality early childhood programs (NAEYC, 1996).

Staff-child ratios for groups of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, kindergartners, and primary-grade children recommended by developmentally appropriate practices and NAEYC accreditation criteria are examples of how these standards of excellence help prevent abuse. Limiting the overall group size helps staff to better meet the individual needs of each child, and teachers are better able to recognize signs or changes in behavior that may indicate the possibility of abuse. Smaller groups may be necessary for children with certain emotional or behavioral problems who require more intensive and direct supervision.

These standards of excellence also provide recommendations about the design of indoor and outdoor program environment to reduce the possibility of private, hidden locations. Young children need opportunities for solitude and quiet play throughout the day, but all early childhood program spaces should be regarded as public. Both indoor and outdoor space can be set up to provide opportunities for solitude while allowing for unobtrusive adult supervision. Likewise, the program environment should be designed to reduce the likelihood that adults have opportunities for hidden interactions with children.

2. *Adopt policies and practices that promote close partnerships with families.* Close partnerships with families can reduce the potential for child abuse by family members and misunderstandings about staff actions. For example, programs should continue to value touch in children’s healthy development. No-touch policies are misguided efforts that fail to recognize the importance of warm, responsive touch, especially for infants and toddlers. Careful, open communication between programs and families about the value of touch in children’s development can help

achieve consensus as to acceptable ways for adults to show their respect and support for children.

Communicating with families, especially about difficult topics, is crucial if educators are to provide support to families. Early childhood programs can provide information and support to families regarding child development and effective strategies for responding to children's behavior (NAEYC, 1996, 2003). This kind of communication is much easier when a supportive, reciprocal relationship already exists. Early childhood professionals should also do the following:

- acknowledge and build upon family strengths and competencies;
 - respect the dignity of each family and its culture, language, customs, and beliefs; and
 - help families understand and appreciate each child's progress within a developmental perspective;
 - help family members enhance their parenting skills; and
 - build support networks for families by providing opportunities for interaction with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services (NAEYC, 1997).
3. *Provide a variety of supportive services to families.* In addition to knowing the signs of abuse and neglect, early childhood professionals should be able to recognize situations that may place children at risk. When working with families who are in those situations, professionals should provide appropriate information and referrals to community services, and follow up to ensure that services have been provided (NAEYC, 1996, 1997). Families' access to health care, housing, income support, and other social services may help protect children from abuse and neglect.
 4. *Advocate for children, families, and teachers in community and society.* Early childhood educators, as individuals and as a profession, should participate in the policy-making process by doing the following:
 - advocating for well-designed, sufficiently funded, and effectively implemented public regulations, programs, and community support services that meet the individual needs of children and families and promote their well-being;
 - cooperating with other individuals and groups in advocacy efforts; and
 - opposing policies that impair child and family well-being (NAEYC, 1997).
 5. *Collaborate with other helping professionals in the community.* The early childhood community should work with other professionals concerned with the welfare of young children and families (NAEYC, 1997). Collaboration with other agencies and disciplines promotes understanding of child development, supports and empowers families, and strengthens advocacy efforts (NAEYC, 1996).
 6. *Understand the ethical obligation to recognize and report suspicions of abuse.* All program staff, substitutes, and volunteers should receive preservice and refresher training regarding the appropriate discipline and guidance of children and child abuse and neglect. Early childhood professionals should do the following:
 - be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse and neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse;
 - know and follow state laws and community procedures that protect children against abuse and neglect; and

- report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate community agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken. When appropriate, educators should inform parents or guardians that a referral has been made (NAEYC, 1997).

In 2002, NAEYC embarked on *Supporting Teachers, Strengthening Families*, an initiative to help early childhood professionals and families prevent abuse and neglect. Additional information about this effort and the roles and responsibilities of early childhood programs and educators to prevent child abuse and neglect is available online at www.naeyc.org/profdev/support_teachers/default.asp. The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation generously supports this work. *See also* Domestic Violence; Families.

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Maril Olson

Child Art

The drawings, paintings, and constructions made by young children have long intrigued artists, educators, psychologists, historians, philosophers, and parents. Over the past century, each group, viewing the same activity from their own unique perspective, has seen and interpreted child art differently. Many early researchers were impressed by the remarkable similarities among drawings made by children of the same age living in different parts of the world. These observers suggested that artistic development was a universal process through which children learn to make increasingly realistic representations as they pass through predictable stages. The evolution of drawn and modeled forms appeared to be closely aligned to other aspects of children's development. Researchers such as Florence Goodenough and Dale Harris, for example, proposed that children's drawings could serve as measures of intellectual maturity, while psychologists such as Karen Machover believed that they revealed emotional distress or well-being.

The apparent universality of children's drawings has been regarded by some as evidence of the powerful influence of principles of image-making also found in the work of mature artists who have not been taught other ways of constructing images or objects. Other contemporary scholars suggest that culture and education

play far more decisive roles, earlier than once imagined, in the evolution of children's drawings, spurring their acquisition of multiple drawing systems within a larger repertoire of representational possibilities or languages.

Traces of these diverse orientations toward child art persist in contemporary teaching, research, and popular imagination, as reflected in ongoing discussions of the impact of adults, peers, and the surrounding culture on the process of early artistic learning. A growing number of students of children's art now share the view, as noted several decades ago by one scholar, "If we are to understand child art we must look at what the child has represented and expressed, the conditions under which child art is made, and ourselves and others in the act of studying it" (Wilson, 1997, p. 83).

Stages of Artistic Development

Though it is likely that children have always engaged in playful markmaking and graphic representation, child art was "discovered" late in the nineteenth century, when artists and scholars began to notice children making marks and images on the walls of European cities. Adult observers were immediately fascinated by the differences in complexity and realism between the drawings made by the children tall enough to reach the upper surfaces of the walls and the vigorous scribbled marks that appeared closer to the bottom. The study of child art turned quickly from the spontaneously made images produced by children as part of their play, toward the analysis of drawings on paper purposely collected by adults, often from large groups of children whose work could be compared with others of their age, nationality, and sometimes gender. Researchers found striking similarities in composition and structure of the individual components of these drawings that seemed to change with the age of the children and to persist across cultures. These characteristics were presented as developmental stages, which varied from one writer to the next in number, name, or details, but largely agreed in identifying certain landmarks of developmental progress and universal patterns of change in children's drawings.

Among the most enduring and influential descriptions of children's artistic development was that formulated by Viktor Lowenfeld and popularized in his book, *Creative and Mental Growth*, first published in 1947, with an 8th edition published in 1987. Lowenfeld described six stages of development—scribbling (ages 2–4); preschematic (ages 4–7); schematic (ages 7–9); dawning realism (ages 9–11); pseudonaturalistic (ages 11–14); and adolescence (ages 14 through 17). He believed that children's art making was intertwined with intellectual, emotional, social, perceptual, physical, and aesthetic growth, with art as both a reflection of, and an impetus for, continued development of each of these capacities in children. Lowenfeld emphasized that children use art to construct meaning, to examine, and to represent their experiences and understandings. Thus, in describing the scribbling stage, Lowenfeld paid particular attention to the third substage of scribbling in his taxonomy, the point at which children begin to name their scribbles, noting some resemblance between marks they have made through vigorous motion and some object or event they had previously experienced. The significance of this shift in attention from the purely physical gesture of

scribbling to an interest in the representational possibilities of marks also intrigued scholars from Lev **Vygotsky** to Merleau Ponty to Howard Gardner, each of whom shared Lowenfeld's recognition of the naming of scribbles as harbinger of an emergent understanding of symbolism. And yet other scholars, notably Rhoda Kellogg, who studied scribbling and its relationship to the evolution of form in the drawings of preschool children, believed that the intensity and the appearance of young children's image-making could be explained solely in terms of their interest in creating balanced abstract designs.

From the beginning of the study of child art, there has been far less agreement on the meaning and the mechanism of the changes that can be observed in children's drawings than about the basic proposition that children's drawings *do* tend to change over time. Certain characteristics seem to be perennially typical of young children's image-making. The emergence of the figure known as the "tadpole man," a first representation of a human resembling a potato sprouting arms and legs from an area encircling an undifferentiated head and torso, is one of these characteristics. The accumulation of figures and objects apparently floating on the page, oblivious to the force of gravity, is a very common way for young children to construct the visual narratives that mirror the free associations of their verbal accounts. Among children in the early primary years, the division of the drawing page into bands of sky and earth, with air in between, providing a narrow stage on which to place houses, trees, dogs, and people, is seen the world over, providing a logical way of depicting their sense of order in the universe of their drawings, and, perhaps, of their experiences as well. These landmarks appear frequently enough to suggest that maturation does play an important role in the acquisition of drawing skills and strategies, while individual differences among children point to the impact of experience with art media, gendered and idiosyncratic interests, and the availability of adult support and cultural models. Many of those who amassed large collections of child art early in the last century, in the midst of significant political turmoil, hoped that they had discovered the beginnings of a universal language in the ubiquitous symbols of child art. In order to preserve this innocent language, they urged parents and teachers to allow child art to unfold unfettered by adult influence or intervention. This advice was offered with great urgency in regard to the art of young children. In recent years, a substantial shift has occurred, as researchers have come to notice and value the cultural and individual differences that exist in children's drawings, and as the focus of research has gravitated increasingly toward the process of drawing, particularly as a process that occurs for many young children in the intensely active social contexts of classrooms and communities.

Attitudes toward Child Art

Jo Alice Leeds (1989) suggested that attitudes toward child art change in response to changes in pervasive cultural beliefs about art and about children. When galleries were filled with large Abstract Expressionist canvases, for example, preschoolers were encouraged to paint freely at easels with large brushes and the exuberant paintings that resulted were highly prized. Wilson (1997, 2004) attributes the current retreat from the certainties of developmental stage theory as

symptomatic of a larger cultural shift from the reliance on an encompassing “grand narrative” that characterized Modernist thought, to a more postmodern comfort with modest explanations, small stories that may contradict one another, but may, in doing so, reveal complexities that the grand narrative could not articulate.

Contemporary Perspectives on Young Children’s Art

After years in which the matter of child art seemed to be relatively well understood, its progress described in sufficient detail to guide both pedagogy and parenting, there is a resurgence of interest in understanding art in contemporary childhood. Classification of children’s drawings according to the complexity of their structure—looking, for example, at the placement of the baseline in landscapes, or the number of details in human figures—has come to seem less important and less useful as a source of knowledge than the information that can be gleaned from the content of their work.

Children’s drawings are now recognized across disciplines as important social documents, sources of information about children’s interpretations of their experiences, and ways of eliciting conversation about their interests and ideas.

With this renewed interest in the content of children’s drawings has come increased attention to the contexts, cultures, and circumstances in which children make art and the influences that come into play in that process. The recognition that drawing, for young children, is an immediate, ephemeral, and social act, and that finished drawings sometimes mask the competence of the child and the complexity of the process that brought the drawing about, recommend close observation and careful documentation of drawing events. This understanding of the importance of the conversations, gestures, and sequences of actions and decisions surrounding children’s engagement in art making informs much current theory and practice on early childhood art.

Currently, adults interested in the ways children make meaning through image-making pay increasing attention to the social and performative context that surrounds young children’s artistic productions and also consider children’s agency as producers and critics of culture, rather than mere consumers. While children’s drawings have been the focus of most research and theoretical attention, newly expanded images of children’s capabilities as artists and audiences for cultural materials, including traditional art forms and contemporary visual culture, provide a broader understanding of children’s participation in the visual arts. Children’s video works, their performances, the choices they make in clothing, toys, music, and movies—artifacts of the visual and material culture of childhood—have come to be considered as sites where children make choices and meaning through visual means. This interest in the cultural context of childhood has led to interest in the kinds of art that children produce on their own or with peers, for their own purposes, beyond the work expressly sanctioned by adults in the public space of the classroom.

Practices that challenge established assumptions of how children develop in art—for example, the highly sophisticated art works that children in the preschools of **Reggio Emilia** routinely produce—have prompted scholars in the fields of education and developmental psychology to reconsider how and when

children develop in and through making art-like things. The developmental questions have not been abandoned, but rather reframed through compound lenses that offer multiple points of view that promise to inform our understanding of how and when development happens. Despite these changes, interest in children's drawings remains high, since young children's drawings continue to serve as places where children strive to construct and communicate meaning through visual languages. *See also* Language Diversity; Symbolic Languages.

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Christine Marmé Thompson and Marissa McClure Vollrath

Child Care

Child care is a broad term that encompasses services that protect the health, safety, and well-being of children who require custodial care by adults other than their own parents for a temporary period of time. Child care can provide a number of important services, including the provision of nurturance and learning opportunities for children, support for employed parents, respite care in child welfare cases, access to supplemental services (e.g., vision and hearing screening, developmental testing, feeding programs), and parent support and literacy programs (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000; National Research Council, 2001).

The most common understanding of child care is one of community-based child care in which a child development program is provided for infants or children, away from home, for less than twenty-four hours per day for each infant or child. Child care is typically a full-working day service that provides supervision, nurturance, and learning opportunities to children of job-holding parents, or parents who attend school or job training. Child care is delivered in the private nonprofit, private for-profit, and public sectors in programs known as child-care centers, child development centers, family child-care homes, or infant care centers. The prevailing definition of child-care does not include public or private elementary or secondary schools engaged in legally required educational and related functions. For children with extremely unstable family circumstances, states have developed institutional child-care services that provide a safe and nurturing environment for children in residential facilities, day treatment centers, and child placement agencies.

While child care is increasingly seen as an important component of a broader system of early care and education that includes half-day prekindergarten, part-day

Head Start, and half-day **kindergarten**, there are important distinctions between current U.S. interpretations of child care and these “early education” programs. In particular, child care is explicitly intended to support working parents and, therefore, is offered for extended hours during the day. Even though the term “day care” is frequently used interchangeably with “child care,” it is an inadequate synonym. Day care is increasingly regarded as an inappropriate term not only because child-care services are often provided during evening hours and overnight to meet the needs of parents who work nontraditional and shifting hours, but also because children are cared for, not days.

Child Care Delivery

During the 1990s, federal child-care assistance programs began to focus on parents as consumers. As a result, an increasing amount of child-care subsidy funding is now provided in the form of vouchers that parents may use to secure child care in a range of legal settings. Administering programs in this manner allows parents increased choice.

Child-care providers can be broadly classified as being relatives or nonrelatives of children. *Relatives* include mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, and *other relatives* such as aunts, uncles, and cousins. Relative care is often referred to as kith and kin care. *Nonrelatives* include in-home babysitters, neighbors, friends, and other nonrelatives providing care either in the child’s or the provider’s home, in addition to *family child-care providers* who are nonrelatives who care for one or more unrelated children in the provider’s home. An *organized child-care facility* is a child-care center, nursery school, or preschool. Child-care facilities can be public, private, religious, secular, home-based, or center-based.

Quality of Child Care

In general, both parents and researchers agree that there are three broad categories of variables they want to see in a high-quality child-care program: (1) a sensitive and nurturing child-provider relationship; (2) manageable and monitored structural features of care (e.g., child to staff ratios, group size); and (3) supportive financing, regulatory, and staff development contexts (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000). Research has shown that these interrelated areas have a significant impact on the outcomes for young children in child care. In general, young children whose caregivers are attentive, supportive, provide ample verbal and cognitive stimulation, and who are sensitive and responsive are more developmentally advanced than children who do not have caregivers with these attributes (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2005).

Child care as a profession, though, is unstable. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, turnover rates among them (including those who move from one child-care program to another as well as those who leave the field altogether) range from 25 to 40 percent annually across the nation, among the highest of any profession. Exacerbating this are the low wages and minimal employment benefits offered to child-care workers (see, e.g., Center for the Child Care Workforce, 2004).

Child care is administered at both the federal and state levels primarily through departments of human or social services. States set minimum requirements for child-care programs to protect children from injury, unsafe buildings and equipment, fire, and infectious disease. All states regulate child-care centers and some family child-care homes through a licensing or registration procedure, although some centers and many homes are exempt from regulation. Exemptions vary based on what a state decides to regulate. For example, some states do not regulate part-day programs or programs associated with religious organizations. There is, however, general agreement in most states that they do not license the following situations as family child care:

- parents caring for their own children;
- relatives caring for only related children;
- foster parents caring only for foster children;
- care provided only while parents are on the premises; and
- care that is not regularly scheduled or is offered for only a few hours a week.

(Morgan et al., 2001)

Beyond basic health and safety requirements, child-care rules and regulations also define a baseline of minimum quality that varies from state to state. The primary structural aspects of child care that are regulated by states' licensing rules are child to staff ratios, maximum group sizes, and staff qualifications and ongoing training.

With both changes to the welfare system and changing patterns of workforce participation of women, there has been a growing demand for child care and an increased recognition of the need for more funding for child-care services. Taking account of the entire child-care industry, families pay approximately 60 percent of total estimated annual expenditures for child care in the United States. Government (federal, state, and local) pays most of the balance (39%) through directly subsidizing all or part of child-care tuition fees or through tax credits. The private business and philanthropic sectors contribute less than 1 percent.

Many families are limited in what they can afford to pay, although they often spend a significant portion of their income on child care. According to Census Bureau figures, low-income families spend approximately 18 percent of their income on child care, compared with nonpoor families who spend 7 percent. Child-care affordability is a serious consideration for both parents and policymakers.

Child-care Policy History

On the basis of the values of industry, independence, religious freedom and toleration, and the belief that the family has primary responsibility for nurturing and educating children, social services in the United States were primarily designed to serve as institutions of last resort when personal and family supports failed. Child care is no different; its history is one of social welfare and services to the poor. While the dominant form of care and education for young children has traditionally been care by parents, out-of home care was first established in the early nineteenth century with the establishment of charitable infant and nursery schools to serve children of the indigent, providing what their parents could not or did not. Child care received heightened federal attention and funding during

national times of crisis such as the Great Depression when large numbers of American families faced poverty, and World War II when increasing numbers of mothers were required to enter the workforce (Michel, 1996).

During the 1960s, child care became linked to welfare reform when Congress decided to help welfare mothers into the workforce by supporting targeted child care through block grants to states. A coalition of feminists, labor, and children's professionals supported an effort to federally legislate universal child-care provisions in 1971 with the Comprehensive Child Development Act. President Nixon vetoed the Act and, today, the United States remains as one of the few advanced industrial societies that lacks a comprehensive government-supported system of child care (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2001).

Within the context of welfare reform, the federal Family Support Act of 1988 required welfare recipients to work or participate in federally funded job training programs and states were to guarantee child-care services. Fewer than half of the states ultimately complied and advocates seized the opportunity to reopen a national debate about child care. As a result, in 1990, the **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** was signed into federal law, providing funding to states to provide child-care services primarily to low-income families. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 blended CCDBG with other funding streams, creating the **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**. CCDF is the major source of federal funding available to states, territories, and tribes to assist low-income families, families receiving temporary public assistance, and those transitioning from public assistance in obtaining child care so they can work or attend training/education.

Child Care Today

While the policy history of child care is dominated by a social welfare perspective, demographic changes in American family life since the 1950s have made child care an important issue for more than just low-income families. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2004, nearly 62 percent of mothers with children under the age of six and 53 percent of mothers of children younger than a year old were in the labor force. Whether these mothers need to work—because they are heads of households or single parents—or whether these mothers want to work, they are in the workforce and they often require child care. Child care has become an important issue for families of all economic levels and social sectors of the United States.

Furthermore, child care is no longer viewed simply as a support for working families, but increasingly as a means to provide children with early learning opportunities. In any high-quality early learning setting (e.g., child care, prekindergarten, Head Start), care and education are delivered hand-in-hand, meeting the developmental and experiential needs of young children. Child care is one means not only for providing children with a safe environment, but also for nurturing children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. *See also* Child Care Subsidies and Tax Provisions; Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Kristie Kauerz

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary federal child-care program in the United States. Using block-grants to states, the CCDF provides approximately \$4.8 billion annually to assist low-income families and families who are receiving or transitioning from temporary public assistance to obtain child care so they can work or attend training or education programs. The children served by the CCDF range from birth to thirteen years and are cared for in child-care centers, public schools, family child-care homes, as well as in more informal care arrangements with family members, friends, or neighbors. In fiscal year 2004, the CCDF served 1.7 million children. The majority of these children (63%) were under six years of age, had working parents (81%), and were cared for in center-based arrangements (59%) (U.S. House of Representatives, 2004). In addition, the CCDF appropriation includes additional funding for specific purposes: nearly \$172 million for quality expansion, \$100 million to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers, and \$19 million to improve school-age care and Child Care Resource and Referral Services.

The CCDF was created in 1996 as part of a major restructuring of Federal welfare programs. The restructuring ended the welfare entitlement for low-income mothers and replaced it with a time-limited, work-focused program (see Cohen, 2001, for historical account). To provide child-care assistance to low-income, working mothers, the CCDF was created to consolidate and expand other federal child-care programs in effect at the time. With the aim of streamlining programs that had different foci and conflicting rules regarding eligibility, time limits, and work requirements, the newly created CCDF combined the multiple funding streams into one flexible block-grant administered by the states. States determine which families are eligible, the size of payments provided to the child-care providers, and other important elements of the child-care programs. In addition, states must use at least 4 percent of their block-grant to improve the quality or availability of child care but may choose to invest those dollars as they see fit. Thus states

vary in their investment in such services as resource and referral counseling for parents and **professional development** for providers.

As states have responded to the flexibility offered to them under the CCDF, the result has been significant variation among state child-care assistance policies that affect the availability, affordability, and quality of child-care provided to low-income children. For example, in 2002, states' eligibility levels for a family of three ranged from \$15,020 (in New Mexico) to \$46,248 (in Alaska). Monthly child-care copayments for a family in poverty ranged from \$0 in nine states to \$435 a month (in Texas). Monthly reimbursement rates for full-time preschool care ranged from \$330 (in Louisiana) to \$903 (in New York) (CDF, 2003). This policy variation shapes the level and nature of assistance available to low-income families and leads child-care advocates to call for carefully monitoring to assess equity in the provision of services across states.

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Elizabeth Rigby

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections

Child Care and Early Education *Research Connections* is a comprehensive resource for researchers and policymakers to promote high-quality research and inform policy on early care and education. *Research Connections* is based at the **National Center for Children in Poverty** (NCCP), a division of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

The central feature of *Research Connections* is its Web site www.childcareresearch.org, which provides easy access to a searchable collection of research drawn from over fifty disciplines related to child care and early education. Continually updated, the collection currently contains over 7,000 resources. Resources in the collection examine the child care and early education experiences of children from birth through eight years and—when addressing school-age child care—through age 13. Other topics covered include parents and families using child care and early education services, the early childhood and school-age child-care work force, and child care and early education settings, programs, and policies. Resources include original research, syntheses, datasets (to download and to analyze online), instruments and measures (used for data collection), and other research-related materials. Additionally, the site provides guidance on understanding and assessing research quality, policy links on early care and education, and tools to analyze fifty-state data.

In addition to its research collection, *Research Connections* prepares briefs and reviews that synthesize policy-relevant research findings, for example, on

child-care subsidies, promoting early language and literacy, and infant and toddler child care. All *Research Connections* publications are available on its Web site. *Research Connections* also undertakes a range of additional activities, which include organizing trainings on data analysis; convening roundtables on emerging issues; sharing materials from collaborations of researchers and policymakers; highlighting events and opportunities in the field; and responding to online research and policy requests. Information about these activities is available on the Web site.

Research Connections is supported by the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through a cooperative agreement with the National Center for Children in Poverty and its partner, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan. Access *Research Connections* at www.childcareresearch.org. For more information or assistance, send an e-mail to contact@childcareresearch.org.

Meredith Willa

Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

When Congress passed the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**, thousands of low-income families receiving public assistance were required to participate in the work force. Because of the expected increase in parental employment, especially among single mothers, Congress also raised the federal government's support of nonparental care by expanding the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). This expansion gave money to the states to provide vouchers for some welfare recipients and child care providers for care of children under age 13 years. The United States Department of Health and Human Services administers the block grant under the name Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).

Originally created in 1990, CCDBG was designed to assist low-income working families that did not usually receive public assistance. The goal of the block grant was to increase child care availability, affordability, and quality and to enable low-income working families to participate in education and training programs. The expanded CCDBG replaced three federal child care programs: AFDC Child Care (geared to AFDC recipient families enrolled in education or training programs), Transitional Child Care (which helped families moving from AFDC to work), and At Risk Child Care (a program for families "at risk" of AFDC).

CCDBG gives states greater flexibility in allocating child care dollars, allowing them to set their own income limits, copayments, work requirements, and other procedures. There are, however, some federally imposed limitations. CCDBG funds can be used for care that is family-, home- or center-based, public or private, or religious or secular. Funding is available for families with incomes up to 85 percent of the state median for its size. Since CCDBG is not an entitlement program, not every family that is income-eligible receives it. According to the Administration for Children and Families, states generally give priority to several

groups: teenage parents, especially those without high-school diplomas or GEDs, families on TANF or those transitioning off, families experiencing medical emergencies, parents enrolled in postsecondary education, families in homeless or spousal abuse shelters, children in foster care or protective services, and low-income parents with children seeking before- and after-school care. Further, states must use at least 4 percent of their allocated funds to improve child care quality.

Eligible families usually receive a child care voucher that they may use with any state-regulated provider. Some states, however, contract directly with providers for a limited number of slots; the provider then receives the payment for that slot from the government, up to a state maximum. Families pay a monthly copayment that is established by the government based on factors such as family size and income. Providers accept the voucher (or contracted government rate) as full payment, though these payments do not always cover the total cost of care. When the vouchers do not cover the full cost, some states allow providers to charge the family a fee in addition to their copayment to make up the differences.

While the CCDBG has been helpful to many low-income families, experts suggest that only 15–20 percent of those eligible for the fund receive it, for various reasons. Some families need the services but are unaware that the vouchers are available; others qualify according to the federal regulations, but do not meet the more stringent state policies; for some states funding is inadequate to meet the increasing need for subsidized care; and still others, particularly those living in expensive areas, have a difficult time finding a provider who will accept the vouchers. In an attempt to address these problems and to respond to increases in work requirements for TANF, welfare reform reauthorization has requested an increase in CCDBG of \$1 billion over five years. Some policy experts, however, including the Congressional Budget, estimate that in order to cover most of the eligible families under welfare reform reauthorization, states would need an additional \$6.1 billion over a five-year span. CCDBG was due to be reauthorized in July 2002, along with PRWORA, but to date, only the House has passed a reauthorization plan, with no Senate action.

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Child Care Information Exchange. *See* Exchange

Child-care Subsidies and Tax Provisions

Making child care affordable and employment possible for parents, while supporting positive development of children, has become an increasingly important public policy goal in the United States since the 1960s. To these ends, the federal and state governments have enacted a succession of legislation to directly subsidize child care and early education, as well as tax provisions to offset child-care costs. Subsidies have typically targeted low-income parents—with children through age 12—who are employed or preparing for employment. Tax provisions have been aimed at working families of all economic levels.

Subsidies take two basic forms. Widespread today are portable public payments that follow children—often called “voucher” payments—to help pay for child-care arrangements eligible families make for their children. The second are publicly financed child-care and early education programs—sometimes known as “contract” centers or family child-care networks. More common in the early decades of child-care subsidies in the United States, these programs are available to eligible families at low or no cost.

The two main child-care tax provisions that benefit families are tax credits for child-care expenses and employer-sponsored accounts of untaxed earnings that employees set aside to reimburse child-care costs.

Child-care Subsidies

Major federal programs that allocate funds to states for child-care subsidies and the primary families they target have included (chronologically) the following:

- **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)** (1981–present). For low-income working families.
- **Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)/JOBS Child Care** (1988–1996). For families receiving AFDC and employed or participating in approved education, training, work preparation activities.
- **Transitional Child Care** (1988–1996). For families leaving AFDC for employment, for one year.
- **At-Risk Child Care** (1990–1996). For families at risk of receiving AFDC cash assistance.
- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** (1990–1996). For low-income working families.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)** (1996–present). Called CCDF by the Department of Health and Human Services, this 1996 amendment to CCDBG combined AFDC/JOBs, Transitional, At-Risk, and CCDBG child care and aimed to serve low-income working parents with and without connections to cash assistance.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Child Care** (1996–present). For families receiving TANF and other needy families working or preparing for work receive direct TANF child-care subsidies. Most states also transfer unspent TANF funds to CCDF; some transfer to SSBG as well.

Two other major federal programs that support child care and early education are the following:

- **Head Start** (1965–present). For families at or below the federal poverty level, with children three years old to kindergarten entry. Designed to help break the cycle of poverty, Head Start provides a free, comprehensive child development program to meet children’s emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs and works closely with parents. The federal government awards grants to local public agencies, private organizations, Indian Tribes, and school systems to operate Head Start programs at the community level. Usually part-day and part-year, Head Start programs help some participating employed parents meet some of their child-care needs. Particularly after the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 began moving more low-income mothers into the workforce, Head Start programs increasingly looked for ways to extend their service days, sometimes with wrap-around CCDF funding.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** (1968–present). For child-care providers serving children of low- and middle-income families. Participating providers receive reimbursements for the costs of meals and snacks—with higher reimbursements for low-income children, communities, or family child-care providers.

Spending for federal child-care programs increased substantially with the 1988–1990 creation of CCDBG, AFDC/JOBS, Transitional, and At-Risk child care—the last three responding to new work requirements for AFDC recipients. Head Start spending also began growing steadily in the early 1990s. Another, even larger, boost in child care spending came with the passage of CCDF in 1996, companion legislation to PRWORA, which replaced AFDC cash assistance with time-limited TANF benefits. Between 1997 and 2001, total federal and related state spending for CCDF, TANF, SSBG, Head Start, and CACFP rose to 69 percent, from about \$11.1 billion to nearly \$18.8 billion (in 2002 dollars). Growth slowed starting in 2001, reaching \$20.4 billion in 2003—84 percent for the seven-year period (Table 1, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Spending totals for CCDF and TANF child care include state and some county expenditures in maintenance-of-effort and matching funds. A number of states also regularly spend above the amounts required to receive their maximum CCDF allocations from the federal government. A few localities also support child-care subsidies, often serving families with incomes above eligibility cutoffs for state subsidy programs.

In 2003, the CCDF, TANF, SSBG, and Head Start programs paid for care for over 3 million children—CCDF 1.75 million; TANF 475,000; SSBG 38,000; Head Start about 900,000. The CACFP reimbursed meal and snack costs for 2.91 million children, many in child-care centers and homes that also received subsidies for child-care services. Despite these impressive numbers served, many eligible children do not receive subsidies. With the exception of CACFP, none of these programs is an entitlement. (While all licensed and approved providers serving low- and middle-income children are entitled to participate in CACFP, many do not apply or are not approved.)

In the early 1990s, states began establishing prekindergarten programs. Like the contracted centers and family child-care networks established early on with SSBG

funding and like Head Starts, prekindergartens are publicly supported programs. In the 1991–1992 school year, pioneering states spent an estimated \$700 million on free, part-day, part-year programs, mainly for disadvantaged four-year-old children at risk of low school achievement. By the 2002–2003 school year, thirty-eight states spent about \$2.54 billion to serve approximately 740,000 children. Some states were also serving three-year-olds, and five states were moving to universally available services for children of all income levels. Although prekindergarten services are often offered in public schools, twenty-eight states make provision for prekindergarten in community-based child-care settings (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2004). Like Head Start programs, prekindergarten programs help fill some child-care needs for employed parents.

Portable voucher subsidies—not tied to particular programs—came into increasing use with the establishment of the AFDC/JOBS, Transitional, and At-Risk child-care programs and the accompanying expansion of funding. Voucher use grew even more with creation of the CCDF, which emphasizes parent choice of care and charges states to make subsidies available for all legal forms of care that meet basic health and safety requirements. States may exempt otherwise unregulated care by relatives and in children’s own homes from these requirements, or they may set up more stringent requirements. Most states make voucher payments directly to child-care providers, though a few make some payments to parents to pass on to caregivers.

CCDF gives states great flexibility on key subsidy policies, issues central to operating any subsidy program within available financial resources:

- **Income eligibility:** While CCDF sets the maximum income eligibility ceiling at 85 percent of State Median Income (SMI) based on family size, states typically set lower ceilings as they strive to stay within their budgets. In 2002, the average state eligibility ceiling was 62 percent of SMI, and most families served across the county had incomes well below this level.
- **Work and training requirements:** Unless subsidies are provided for reasons related to child welfare, CCDF requires that participating parents be working or involved in training or education, but gives states broad discretion in defining these activities.
- **Service rationing:** CCDF gives no categories of families’ entitlement to subsidies, as did the predecessor AFDC/JOBS and Transitional programs. Virtually all states, however, continue to guarantee subsidies to families connected to cash assistance. Further, about half the states have a commitment to serve all state-eligible families who apply, although—like all states—they may lower eligibility ceilings in response to budget shortfalls. The remaining states typically maintain waiting lists.
- **Provider payment rates:** CCDF asks states for evidence that their maximum payment rates give subsidized families access to a major portion of the child-care market in their communities. Though states are required to conduct Child Care Market Rate Surveys, budget limitations often force them to set rates lower than those indicated by the surveys.
- **Parent copayments:** Subsidized parents pay a portion of the state rate for their care—based on a sliding scale that typically takes into account income, family size, and number of children in care. There are significant state differences among copayment scales and in the percentage of income required for copayments from families at similar income levels. Also, when cost of care exceeds the maximum rate, parents normally pay the difference.

Child-care Tax Provisions

The following two tax mechanisms assist working families with child-care costs:

- Federal and state Child and Dependent Care Tax Credits (1976–present, federal).
- Federal Dependent Care Assistance Plan (1981–present).

The federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit reduces the taxes of working families with child-care expenses. Eligible families must incur expenses for the care of a child under age 13—or of an older dependent unable to care for himself or herself—in order to work or look for work. Twice since its enactment in 1976, the credit has been increased and made more progressive. Beginning in 2003, families with incomes up to \$15,000 may claim an annual credit of up to \$1,050 for one child (35% of a maximum of \$3,000 in expenses) and \$2,100 for two or more (35% of \$6,000 maximum). Families with higher incomes may claim progressively lower percentages of their child-care expenses. At \$43,000 and above, the maximum credit for one child is \$600 (20% of \$3,000) \$1,200 for two or more (20% of \$6,000). The credit cannot exceed what a family owes in taxes, and no benefit is provided to families whose incomes are so low that they pay no taxes. Thus, low-income families typically do not receive the credit's full benefit (Burman, Maag, and Rohaly, 2005). In federal fiscal year 2003, the U.S. Treasury lost an estimated \$2.7 billion in forgone revenue due to the credit, an amount slightly higher than that year's child-care subsidy expenditures from TANF.

By 2004, twenty-seven states also offered a child and dependent care tax credit or tax deduction. Most states' tax credits are structured as a percentage of the federal credit or as a percentage of the care expenses eligible for that credit. Unlike the federal government, thirteen states with child and dependent-care tax provisions offer refundable credits, benefiting even families with incomes too low to owe state income taxes. Maximum annual values for 2004 ranged from \$288 to \$2,310 for a family with two or more children. Twelve states offered nonrefundable credits, and three offered deductions of child care expenses. (One state offered both.)

The federal Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP) can benefit families of all income levels. Employees whose employers have set up DCAP plans may put aside up to \$5,000 of their earnings each year, tax-free. They may then draw up these accounts to reimburse their documented child-care expenses. In federal fiscal year 2003, estimated revenue loss to the Treasury from DCAPs was approximately \$577 million.

Although not specifically tied to child-care expenses, federal and state Earned Income Tax Credits and federal Child Tax Credit also extend the resources available to low-income families. *See also* Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Lee Kreader

Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program

The Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Program is a competency-based assessment system that offers early childhood professionals the opportunity to develop and demonstrate competence in their work with children ages 5 and younger. Originally developed in 1975 as a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau, and the early childhood field, the CDA program has provided a nationally recognized system that has stimulated early childhood training and education opportunities for teachers of young children in every state in the country and on military bases worldwide. The credential is recognized nationwide in state regulations for licensed centers as a qualification for teachers, directors, and/or family child-care providers. The standards for performance that this program has established are used as a basis for professional development across the field of early childhood education.

The CDA program offers credentials to educators in four types of settings: (1) center-based programs for preschoolers, (2) center-based programs for infants/toddlers, (3) family child-care homes, and (4) home visitor programs. Regardless of setting, all CDAs must demonstrate their ability to provide competent care and early education practice in thirteen skill areas organized into six competency areas, which are outlined in the table below. Evidence of ability is collected from a variety of sources including first-hand observational evidence of the CDA candidate's performance with children and families, and this evidence is weighed against national standards. The CDA national office sets the standards for competent performance and monitors this assessment process so that it is uniform throughout the country.

By 2004, nearly 200,000 individuals had received the CDA Credential, with the vast majority (over 80%) prepared to work in centers with three- and four-year-old children. Research studies have found that CDAs have a very high rate of retention in the field, move upwards in terms of salaries and positions, and tend to continue their formal education toward college degrees (Day, 2004). Research studies have also shown that the CDA credential has a strong correlation with classroom quality and outcomes for young children (Raikes and Midwest Child Care Research Group, 2003).

The CDA Competency Standards

<i>Competency Goals</i>	<i>Functional Areas</i>
Goal I. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment.	1. Safe 2. Healthy 3. Learning Environment
Goal II. To advance physical and intellectual competence.	4. Physical 5. Cognitive 6. Communication 7. Creative
Goal III. To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance.	8. Self 9. Social 10. Guidance
Goal IV. To establish positive and productive relationships with families.	11. Families
Goal V. To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participants needs.	12. Program management
Goal VI. To maintain a commitment to professionalism.	13. Professionalism

People who become CDAs are individuals who want careers in early education and who work in any type of early education setting, including public schools, privately funded child-care centers, church-based preschools, Head Start programs, and family child-care homes. Anyone who is eighteen years old and holds a high-school diploma is eligible. However, prior to application for assessment, individuals must acquire the required competencies by participating in some sort of professional preparation. Many two-year colleges, early childhood agencies and organizations, and some employers offer such CDA education and training programs. Scholarships to participate are also offered in many states, and since the CDA preparation often articulates with college-based programs general financial support for higher education is often available to CDA candidates. As it continues to grow in size and scope, the CDA program is playing a major role in enhancing the quality of education for young children.

For more information on the CDA Program, model curriculum materials for the preparation of CDAs, and other resources, visit the Council's Web site at www.cdacouncil.org. The Council also published a history of the first ten years of the CDA program entitled *The Child Development Associate National Program: The Early Years and Pioneers* by Roberta Wong Bouverat and Harlene Lichter Galen, 1994.

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Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM)

The Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM) was unquestionably the most famous Head Start program in Project Head Start's early years. It was created in the spring of 1965, the first season of the national Head Start program's existence, when, in every state and hundreds of localities, centers were being hastily developed. CDGM is still referenced and written about four decades later. It provides an excellent model for those wishing to reach and inspire very low-income parents of young children, particularly in areas here and abroad where there is an extreme shortage of professionals.

R. Sargent Shriver has often said, at the time and ever since, that CDGM was the most important Head Start in the country. Frequently called the Poverty Tsar, Shriver was the Director of the nation's entire poverty program, which emanated from The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the newly established federal agency called the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Sargent Shriver proposed Head Start to President Lyndon B. Johnson, although it was not mandated in the law, as one of OEO's many antipoverty programs. Shriver approved and signed every Head Start grant given in the United States during his tenure (1965-1970), Head Start's first five years.

CDGM was a visible federal investment because it was the epitome of what Shriver and OEO's Community Action staff wanted Head Start to be for children and families living in poverty, and because it represented traditional democratic values: human rights, health care, education, opportunity, jobs, and adequate wages for everyone. The segregationist wing of the Democratic Party (the Dixiecrats), which had controlled the state for many decades, did not share these values. For these reasons, CDGM was funded as the second biggest Head Start program in the country. For its first summer alone, CDGM was given a \$1.3 million grant (in 2006 dollars, this equals about \$5 million) to serve 12,000 children. Shriver considered CDGM so exceptional because it represented "maximum feasible participation of the poor." Although those not directly involved were proclaiming CDGM dead by the end of its first year, it has survived to the present under names such as Mary Holmes College Community Extension and Friends of the Children of Mississippi. CDGM and its descendents have served hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of children and had, by 1990, already received a billion federal dollars.

The CDGM was conceptualized and actualized by founding director Dr. Tom Levin, a New York psychoanalyst; the Reverend Arthur Thomas, who lived in Mississippi as Director of the Delta Ministry; and Polly Greenberg, Shriver's Senior Program Analyst for Head Start in the Southeast Region. Greenberg knew of Shriver's dream for the true community action program that Head Start could be and she urged Levin and Thomas to apply for a Head Start grant. The Delta Ministry was the National Council of Churches' Mississippi ministry and for two years had been doing voter registration; supporting race-related demonstrations; supplying legal advice and bail for jailed rights workers; operating a freedom information service; distributing tons of food, clothing, and books collected by church groups in the North; and other projects. Poor people knew and had faith in Tom and Art. Without the Delta Ministry's trusted community organizers, CDGM could not

have happened. Trusted community organizers are essential to the replication of this Head Start model.

The thousands of children and families who participated in CDGM's Head Start program were black. Most lived in shacks and shanties in a desolate part of the state known as the Delta; most were the grandchildren or great grandchildren of field slaves. White families were too terrified of Ku Klux Klan reprisals even to talk to CDGM's organizers. There are many books about the reign of terror in this regrettable period of Mississippi's history. The documentary "Emmett Till" and two Hollywood films—"Color Purple" and "Mississippi Burning"—illustrate the context in which CDGM was launched. Historians point out that in 1965 Mississippi was the most racially violent, fiercely segregated, and poorest state in the union; it was a caricature of the South.

The Delta covers more than 7,000 square miles, and includes many counties from which no one had applied for a Head Start grant. The most minimal health care, such as immunizations, was not available within sixty miles of many families, most of whom had no transportation. At that time, there were no public kindergartens in the state, not to mention the Delta. Many families lived in Delta communities of ten or fifteen cabins (without plumbing). Obviously, there were no preschools, day-care centers, or early childhood professionals! Most CDGM children were destined to attend some of the worst public schools in the United States, where many of their future elementary teachers could read only at the third-grade level and there was sometimes only one copy of one book in the classroom—a basal reader. Facts about this widely reported phase of the state's history can be obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, numerous articles, books, and documentary films. National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting System websites are also good sources.

Those who became CDGM families lacked just about everything except generosity and courage. Their level of poverty was extreme—many families' incomes averaged \$400 annually. Yet they organized sixty-four CDGM Head Start centers and opened the doors to 12,000 children in dozens of counties, all in eight weeks. To underscore the dangerous context of this astonishing feat, it took place one year after three young people who were helping black residents in Philadelphia, Mississippi register to vote were beaten to death with chains.

In most ways, CDGM centers were like all other Head Start centers in Head Start's earliest years. As guidelines explained, the focus was on children learning to play together, eating nutritious food, and enjoying broadly educational experiences at "school." Health care, social services, and parent participation were as valued as was early childhood education. However, in what many regard as the most important ways, CDGM was eye openingly different. The chief difference was CDGM's three originators' philosophy and the confluence of resources they brought together to implement it.

First, Tom Levin understood how permanently crippling disempowerment of parents is to their children. CDGM's three architects further believed that what happens in the classroom in a brief preschool program, regardless of how good the curriculum, has far less impact upon a child's lifelong trajectory than does what happens in his spirit and sense of possibilities when he watches the enormously disempowered parents with whom he is profoundly identified become competent and confident in bringing him happy days, and in initiating fundamental change

in the community and greater society in which he is growing up. They knew that a livable income helps parents do better by their children—jobs would be at the core of this project. Crucial in CDGM's creation and character was that literally thousands of local, very low-income black leaders and parents in Mississippi, such as the famed freedom fighter Fannie Lou Hamer, passionately shared the philosophy, and quickly became forceful CDGM advocates. Dr. Levin, a specialist in psychological dynamics, considered a major role for poor parents such an overwhelming priority in helping their children that he structured the entire project to implement this principle.

As a result of this fundamental orientation to parents, there were no centers unless parents and their peers organized them. Through Delta Ministry and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) volunteers, most of the latter local black Mississippians, the word was spread across dozens of counties. They explained Head Start guidelines, and that each group of extremely poor residents would need to form a committee to act as the tiny cross-roads community's "school board," find and fix a facility, sign up eligible children by name and address, and hire potential staff if the locality chose to be part of CDGM's grant application. No grant was guaranteed. As just stated, the people's response was immediate and overwhelming. Even the overall Governing Board was two-thirds very poor people. There were four other members, one of whom was CDGM's eloquent spokeswoman and lawyer, the remarkable Marian Wright (Edelman), who had been living in the state in considerable jeopardy for several years handling school desegregation cases for NAACP's Legal Defense Fund.

Secondly, CDGM differed from other Head Start programs because, at great personal risk, participants attempted to implement one of the early national Head Start program's greatest emphases—motivating communities to activate local public health and social services departments and public schools; and to energize volunteers from the most and least powerful sectors, certainly from among the poor themselves, on behalf of low-income families and their children. This was Sargent Shriver's definition of "community action." His mantra was "What if all segments of each community mobilized to reduce poverty?"

Three weeks after CDGM Head Start centers opened, the white power structure at Mississippi's highest levels attacked it as "Communist" and "fiscally irresponsible." In response, poor people and the handful of professionals employed (at \$50 a week) on their central staff and Governing Board members lobbied national leaders of the freedom movement such as Martin Luther King, the National Council of Churches, and the AFL-CIO's Citizen's Crusade Against Poverty. They also sought support from other liberal politicians and leading early childhood educators from many states, the northern press, and sympathetic OEO officials. They advocated so successfully that CDGM received many more Head Start grants. This was the kind of mobilization of middle class and professional communities that Shriver sought.

A third difference between CDGM and other Head Start programs was that it pushed to the limit the emphasis on "new careers for the poor" (especially for mothers), always one of Head Start's extraordinary features nationwide. In most Head Start centers some people learn their jobs as they go along, but key positions in each staff—teachers and directors—are held by individuals with some degree of postsecondary education and/or specialized training. There was no dispute about the value of training, but in CDGM it was believed to be of utmost

importance for all children to participate in Head Start along with parents, relatives, and neighbors who were also learning. With only two exceptions statewide, no center staff members, including teachers, started out trained. The week before centers opened, Polly Greenberg left the federal government to work for CDGM in Mississippi. She designed a teacher development and training of trainers program, which she conducted across the state for two years to ensure that the program for children met Head Start requirements.

As a result of this emphasis on careers for the poor, every child saw one or more of her close relatives and well-known neighbors becoming cooks, drivers, social service workers, health workers, teachers, administrators, or members of a hiring and firing committee. They had seen nothing like this before! Children were not the only ones who were motivated. Several times during its first two years when between grants, poor people continued to operate their full scale Head Start programs for as much as six months without any funding. Within national guidelines, Head Start centers are almost always controlled by members of the middleclass and professionals. Within national guidelines, CDGM centers were controlled by the poor. This distinction was missed by no parent, although it has proven difficult for those lacking direct experience with CDGM to grasp.

The fourth difference between CDGM and most Head Starts was the role of professionals. There were none working directly within the centers. Instead, the handful of central staff professionals in each dimension of the program (administration, health services, early childhood education) provided technical assistance through an each-one-teach-one approach, aiming at enabling indigenous people to replace them within a year or less. Typically, CDGM had two or three professionals per 1,100 job holders and 12,000 children. The role of professionals included helping poor people organize, discuss, discover, and connect to sources and resources of all kinds, from learning to write grant applications to contacting influential people. It included being allies and advocates to the people's grassroots "movement" for children.

CDGM represents one of two very different streams of thought about the purposes of Head Start, the role of parents, and the role of professionals. For CDGM, the focus was not on every "student's" academic progress, or even on the child's social development, though certainly no one would have assailed these goals. CDGM's focus was on actualizing the belief that every human being, including children's parents, matters; and not just during the Head Start year, but throughout their lives. CDGM advocates and other like-minded people believe that substantial social change is required if our wish to help poor children "succeed" is authentic. They believe, further, that if activists don't work for it while developing educational programs, their motives can be considered disingenuous at best and possibly unconsciously protective of class privilege. CDGM's greatest lesson is that poor people, with allies, have great potential to press for change so that they find fewer obstacles and more opportunities to help themselves and their children move out of poverty.

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Polly Greenberg

Children's Defense Fund (CDF)

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a private, nonprofit organization with an extensive track record of research and action on behalf of children. Founded in 1973 by Marian Wright Edelman, CDF has served as a catalyst for effective change on behalf of all American children. Offering a unique approach to improving conditions for children that combines research, public education, policy development, and advocacy activities, CDF has become an important advocate for the nation's most vulnerable children and families.

The Children's Defense Fund's Leave No Child Behind mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. CDF provides a strong, effective voice for all American children who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves, paying particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about children's needs and encourages preventative investment before children get sick, into trouble, drop out of school, or suffer family breakdown.

The Children's Defense Fund brings together the national, state, and local infrastructure; networks; experience; and expertise necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive nationwide approach to overcoming obstacles for working families and children. The national and state Children's Defense Fund offices throughout the country have developed working relationships with social service organizations, religious institutions, and schools and local governments to help eradicate poverty and make children's issues a priority.

The Children's Defense Fund helps the United States keep its promise to bring about better choices for children through education, research, advocacy, and organizing. Recent projects include visiting 500 adult prisons to document abuses suffered by children in adult jails, and advocating for changes in penal laws for children. The Children's Defense Fund also played a major role in generating recognition of and laws for children with special needs. CDF members knocked on 8,500 doors nationwide to report the tragic circumstances of two million children out of school, which led to the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**.

CDF's research and advocacy continue to put a child's face on poverty, discrimination, and gun violence. The CDF's *Children's Defense Budgets* and *State of America's Children* yearbooks help activists stop unwise block grants and budget cuts and push for reforms and expansions in critical services like **Head Start**,

housing, Medicaid, and nutrition programs for low-income mothers and their babies. Important laws that CDF has help to pass or are currently supporting include the landmark State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Vaccines for Children Program, the **Child Care and Development Block Grant**, and the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits.

Each and every year, through direct tax preparation and in partnership with faith-based and other community groups, CDF enables thousands of low-income working families to claim the tax credits to which they are entitled. In one year alone, CDF helped families collect more than \$65 million that went directly into their pockets and then back into local economies. CDF Freedom Schools are partnerships between the Children's Defense Fund and local community organizations, churches, universities, and schools to provide **literacy-rich** summer programs.

The Children's Defense Fund achieves its goals through the efforts of the organization's divisions and a variety of activities. CDF's Programs and Policy Department includes Child Health, Family Income, Child Welfare and Mental Health, Early Childhood Development, and Education and Youth Development, which engage in ongoing policy and communications efforts. The work of these departments includes speaking at national conferences and at Capitol Hill briefings and other influential forums; producing strategic reports; informing and engaging advocates through coalitions, regular updates, action alerts, and listservs; preparing press releases and editorials; and contributing to testimony, floor speeches, and pending legislation in Congress and in states.

Further Readings: Children's Defense Fund Web Site: <http://childrensdefense.org>.

Yasmine Daniel

Children's Media

Children's media is a popular topic in many fields, including early childhood education, child development, psychology, sociology, technology, and media studies. As a term, children's media has been interpreted in different ways, including media connected to books, television, music, movies, theater, computers, videogames, and the Internet that are produced for and engaged by children. Children's media is often a controversial topic within the popular discourse due to the attention it has been given by the political, educational, familial, and other community sectors. As children spend an increasing amount of their day engaged with media and finances are channeled to expand this industry, concerns have been raised regarding the media's effects on children as well as the messages being conveyed to children.

Research on media has primarily examined the media's effects on children from a developmental perspective with a psychological focus on the correlation or causal variables between the media and children's behavior. Despite this dominant point of view, there are other perspectives on children's media. Sociocultural perspectives examine how children's media is situated contextually in social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. Poststructural perspectives are also interested in the media contextually, but emphasize how children and the media

interact with each other. Each of these multiple perspectives will be examined to provide a broader view of children's media.

From the *developmental perspective*, researchers are interested in how a given phenomenon, such as the media, affects children's development. Studies from this perspective are often referred to as "effect studies." Albert **Bandura's** (1973) social learning theory hypothesizes that people acquire behaviors through observations and subsequent modeling of other people's behavior. He was particularly interested in understanding aggression and how people acquire aggressive behaviors. He conducted a meta-analysis of research studies examining the relationship between television viewing and aggression, finding that there is a strong correlational relationship between viewing violence on television and the expression of aggressive behaviors both in the short- and long term. Many researchers have used Bandura's social learning theory to examine how different forms of media, particularly television, influence children's behavior. The popular press often reports on these types of studies, which in turn raise strong concerns among parents and educators. Many policies and regulations have been based upon this perspective, including ratings for movies, music, computer and videogames, the V-chip for cable television, and bans on books.

Adult concerns were further heightened when the Federal Communications Commission deregulated children's television in 1984. This legislation increased advertising minutes and the opportunity for children's toys to be marketed together with children's television programs. There were many concerns that the direct marketing of products related to television programs would negatively influence children's behaviors and in turn their families. Indeed, there was a significant increase in the amount of products available and purchased in connection to television programming. In response to this increase in children's media, many teachers found media-related toys or references to children's media inundated within the classroom. Frequently, teachers banned guns, superhero, and **war play** from the classroom due to the perceived connection to violence and aggression. These concerns are rooted in the developmental perspective and personal beliefs that the media is having a negative influence on children's behavior.

A *sociocultural perspective* differs from the developmental perspective because it situates the media in social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. Thus, this perspective is less focused on the effects of the media on children, but rather in how children interact with, respond to, and construct understanding about the media in cultural contexts such as their homes, classrooms, and in their peer culture groups. A sociocultural perspective often includes a focus on understanding children's perspectives, which is absent in a developmental framework that emphasizes adults' concerns and perspectives on child development.

Like many adults in the early 1980s, Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane Levin (1987) were concerned about the consequences of deregulation of children's television. In their work, they specifically address teachers' concerns about children and the influences of the media. Their sociopolitical theory emphasizes the importance of engaging children in discussions about media-inspired play and they recommend that teachers focus on trying to understand children's use of media within the context of their learning. They argue that parents and teachers should express their concerns directly with marketing companies, television

agencies, and governmental bodies, rather than banning this play or these toys from the children.

William Corsaro (1985) extended the study of children's media by understanding children's daily lives through his theory of **peer culture**. Through long-term studies, he immersed himself in children's lives and found that children used popular culture texts ranging from literature, movies, and television to construct their own peer culture themes and texts. For example, a group of researchers who studied children's peer cultures in a classroom setting found that superheroes were important to the peer culture group. The children used artifacts related to superheroes to show their affiliation as a group of peers. The children were not simply imitating or repeating thematic ideas from the media; rather these media references were important to the children socially (Kantor and Fernie, 2003).

Vivian Paley (2004) has written prolifically about her interest in understanding children's perspectives and how they construct meaning within her classroom. In many of her writings, she discusses children's interest in the media and how it is brought into their play. Paley believes that fantasy play is an essential part of children's lives. She believes teachers should listen and learn from the children as they construct meaning together through their own storytelling, often around media texts ranging from *Little Red Riding Hood* to *Star Wars*.

Poststructural theorists interested in children's media examine the complex interplay between the reader/viewer and the media. In this perspective, children are viewed as simultaneously having agency while not being completely free from the knowledge and power of the media. In Henry Giroux's oft-cited text, "Are Disney Movies Good for Your Kids?" he conducts a critical analysis of the Disney empire, including its movies, theme parks, and the constructed residential community, *Celebration* (1997). Giroux believes that children are not passive consumers of the media, but argues that Disney is extremely large and influential and as such holds a large amount of power and influence on children.

Joseph Tobin (2000) argues for the use of children's voices and perceptions in examining children's media. In his book, *Good guys don't wear hats: Children's talk about the media*, Tobin uses a poststructural lens to analyze children's interactions with the media. He selected specific media clips and had the children view and discuss the clips with each other and with him through interviews. He argues that children's "talk" about the media is not solely their individual perspective, but rather is situated with societal concepts and views of the larger society within which they participate.

Similarly, through her ethnographic study of a primary grade classroom, Anne Haas Dyson (1997) analyzed how children incorporate the media into their classroom texts. She examined the infusion of popular culture both in the "official world" of the classroom and in the "unofficial world" of their peer culture groups. In the "official world" the teacher recognized the children's interests in the media, including superheroes, and incorporated these interests into the classroom, such as through their writing. Through integrating the children's media interests into the classroom context, she and the children analyzed their texts and made connections to societal constructions of racism, sexism, and classism. She utilized their written texts and drawings to examine, name, and critique these constructions within their stories, their classroom, and society. Through this, she was

acknowledging the complex interplay of knowledge construction between the media and the children's constructed texts.

The study of children's media continues to be a complex and emotionally charged topic. Extending research perspectives will assist families, educators, and legislators to better understand how to address and monitor the potential impact of the media on children's lives. *See also* Play as Storytelling; Technology Curriculum.

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Jeanne Galbraith and Laurie Katz

Children's Museums

The Association of Children's Museums (ACM) envisions that these institutions "bring children and families together in a new kind of town-square where play inspires lifelong learning." Children's museums over the past twenty years have been evolving into a respite of multicultural play spaces in an era of increasing efforts to quantify and assess children's learning. With explicit goals to use play to stimulate children's curiosity, motivate children to learn, and to enrich communities, children's museums now work with multiple generations and reach across social class, racial and language boundaries to build community partnerships and extend their accessibility.

Children's museums have changed dramatically since the first museum for children was launched in Brooklyn, New York, in 1899. For about the first 70 years, children's museums served an audience of predominantly school-aged and young adolescent visitors. Exhibits and programming were largely focused on Americana, world cultures, natural history, science, and art. Many of the earliest children's museums held rich collections of artifacts ranging from souvenir dolls, dollhouses and early American household objects, to stuffed birds, shells and rocks. To further their learning, neighborhood children participated in a range of club activities from bell ringing and bird watching to diorama making and stamp collecting. Then, in the mid 1960s, Michael Spock, Director of the Boston Children's Museum, launched a new era in children's museums with the introduction of hands-on and interactive learning. In addition to viewing objects in exhibit cases, young visitors could explore the insides of many household and neighborhood items from washing machines to manholes

In spite of their long history, the growth of children's museums is a relatively recent phenomenon. Over 75 percent of ACM member museums opened in just

the past twenty years. In 1975 there were approximately thirty-eight children's museums in the United States; eighty new museums opened between 1976 and 1990. An additional 100 have opened since 1990, with many serving as flagships in downtown revitalization projects. In 2001 over 31 million children and families visited ACM member museums. As of June 30, 2004, there were about 220 children's museums in the United States with about eighty in some stage of development. There are children's museums in 45 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Only Alaska, South Dakota, Idaho, Vermont, and Delaware do not have a children's museum. Approximately 73 percent of U.S. children's museums are located in urban communities, with 20 percent in suburban, and 7 percent in rural settings.

Young children have always visited children's museum with their older siblings and families; beginning in the 1960s museums began to see an increase in the number of young children (ages 0-5) as the primary child visitor. In 1976, the Please Touch Museum opened in Philadelphia as the first early childhood museum designed for visitors aged 1-7. In 1978, the Boston Children's Museum opened the nation's first "PlaySpace," a parent and child exhibit area especially for children four years and under (Quinn and Robinson, 1984). By the late 1990s, encouraged partly by research on brain development, there was a strong resurgence of interest in the development of an early childhood museum focus, with a number of new spaces, serving children from birth to three years, developed since 2000. Today 78 percent of the children's museums in the United States have an early childhood space or program.

To accommodate younger visitors and their parents, the physical space of museums has changed significantly. For example, museum amenities now include family bathrooms, nursing areas, snacking, and respite areas. Information in the form of parent graphics, tip sheets and exhibit guides help parents introduce and share exhibit concepts with young children.

With sizes ranging from 500 to 5,000 square feet, content, budget and staffing for children's museum programs vary greatly. For example, exhibits may introduce parents and preschoolers to **literacy** through special exhibits on "Clifford, the Big Red Dog" or "Go Figure," an exhibit that brings five math-related picture books to life; both exhibits were created by the Minnesota Children's Museum. PlaySpace, at the Boston Children's Museum, encourages both parents and children to explore the world of play through special areas established to promote creative art experiences as well as gross and fine motor imaginary, discovery, and dramatic play.

As museum programming has shifted, there has been an increased emphasis on community-based partnerships for both families and professional early educators. During the weekdays, museum audiences are predominantly stay-at-home mothers or nannies and young children. Many museums provide significant outreach to the early childhood education community including preschools, **Head Start** and family or center-based child-care programs. Moreover, "the visit" is only one part of what children's museums offer to the community. With professional early childhood educators on staff, many children's museums also offer professional development training for early educators, resources and programs for parents, special family visits and free family memberships and passes. Outreach programs

in ACM member organizations extended to over 3.9 million people in 2000 and to over 6.6 million in 2001.

With adults (most of them parents) making up nearly 50 percent of the visitors, children's museums are in a unique position to provide information and support on child rearing and early education. Museum-sponsored parent programs, such as Families First in Boston and Houston, provide single sessions and series of classes led by experts in family and child development for parents who register and pay a nominal fee.

Even as museums take pride in their accomplishments, recent trends suggest new challenges and possibilities in the twenty-first century. There is a new interest in exploring multicultural and international environments, making the local and international communities a potent classroom. For example, *Boston Black*, an interactive exhibit (at the Boston Children's Museum), allows children to explore the cultural, racial and ethnic diversity of the city. A second trend is tied to changes in museum attendance; as the museum audience has become younger, it is no longer dominated by six- to twelve-year-olds. When museums that traditionally served older children and adults, for example, science museums, began to adopt the successful hands-on, interactive techniques pioneered by children's museums, they increased their appeal to older children. Children's museums are also becoming more widely recognized as a "catalyst for intergenerational learning" and "two generation" programming, given their expanding willingness to provide opportunities for learning and sharing in a supportive environment (Crowley, 2000). In spite of the changing emphases, there is not a strong research base on child and adult learning in museums. Much of what is known comes from short-term problem-solving evaluations and surveys; very few studies have involved young children (Sykes, 1996).

Conclusion

Museums have clearly been transformed into dynamic learning environments where preschool children and their families are welcomed and embraced. In this transformation, significant outreach has occurred to bring museum experiences to children and families in the community. Museums are also increasingly recognized as learning tools for the professional development of early educators. These trends have quickly become institutionalized as part of the children's museum identity (ACM).

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Jeri Robinson and Valora Washington

Child Study Movement

The child study movement, inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution, began in the United States in the early 1880s. The movement attracted and was supported by the work of such luminaries as G. Stanley Hall, John Dewey, Arnold Gesell, and John Watson, as well as a housewife by the name of Cora Bussey Hillis. With the realization that little was scientifically known about how children grow and develop, Hall and Gesell set out to collect a large body of data describing the growth and development of children from infancy to adolescence.

The normative data on children's growth and development collected by Hall and Gesell influenced what parents, teachers, pediatricians, and clinicians came to expect as normal development at each age. The child development research stimulated by the child study movement reinforced the importance of the early childhood years and pointed to the desirability of early childhood programs.

G. Stanley Hall (1844–1924) played a pivotal role in the organization and support of activities of the child study movement. In 1884, Hall became the first professor of psychology in the United States when he was given a professorship at Johns Hopkins and John Dewey was one of Hall's first students. Because Hall believed children progressed through stages of development like flowers unfolding automatically, he thought it was important to observe children under natural conditions to formulate a theory of social development. Children, therefore, became subjects of laboratory study. In 1888 Hall founded the Child Study Association of America, shortly before becoming president of Clark University, a position he held until 1924.

Child study clubs were formed in regions all over the United States and large amounts of data were collected by parents, teachers and academic researchers until the early 1900s. Teachers at the elementary and secondary levels were encouraged to document children's learning and their teaching practices, thus contributing to the developing field of educational psychology. Hall gave extensive questionnaires to large numbers of children of all ages to study "the contents of children's minds." He asked questions regarding interests, fears, shyness, imaginary playmates, dreams, friendships, teasing, bullying, favorite toys, and more. Data from questionnaires was aimed at helping teachers learn what knowledge and experiences children had upon entry to kindergarten. Averages of all the items were taken as typical development. The National Education Association established a Department of Child Study in 1893.

Another major contributor to the Child Study Movement was another of Hall's students, Arnold Gesell (1880-1961). After receiving his Ph.D. in psychology in 1906, Gesell set up a "psycho-clinic" at Yale's New Haven (CT) Dispensary so that he might study every facet of the development of infants and children from white, middle-class families (motor skills, social behavior, and personality characteristics) and then establish "norms" or descriptions of typical development at each age level.

Also in 1906, Cora Bussey Hillis, an Iowa housewife and mother, proposed the idea of a research station at the University of Iowa for the study of children and the improvement of child rearing. She reasoned that if raising hogs and corn could be improved by research so could child rearing. This led to the establishment of the University of Iowa Child Welfare Research Station in 1917. The Iowa facility and the Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit became the models

for other child development institutes that were set up across the country in the 1920s and 1930s. Because one of the main purposes was the dissemination of information about children to parents, teachers, and college faculty, a number of publications were launched: university monographs, research journals (*Child Development*), and magazines (*Parents' Magazine*). The new research institutes also awarded graduate degrees in child development. Upon graduation, these new professionals found employment in colleges and universities, as well as in a variety of applied settings.

The 1920s were the “golden age” for the study of children in the United States. New private and government funds were forthcoming to support child study and parent education. The Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial provided millions to foster child development as a growing field of scientific endeavor. Under the direction of Lawrence Frank, funds were awarded to establish major child research centers at the University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University, and the University of Minnesota. Financial support was also provided to existing research centers at Yale and the University of Iowa. Smaller research institutes were launched at the University of Michigan and in Washington, DC, and funds were provided for individual research projects. Reflecting the growing interest in and importance attributed to the study of child development, The Society for Research in Child Development was founded in 1930.

The research contributions of these pioneers in child study were summed up in 1930 by Florence Goodenough (Cairns, 1998).

- Mental testing—All research institutes were investigating mental testing. Iowa documented the effects of an enriched environment on intelligence. Minnesota and Fels studied stability and change in intelligence. Stanford disputed any research claims that intelligence was malleable.
- Longitudinal study—Most researchers believed that longitudinal studies were necessary, but did not have the funding or the guarantee that their institutes were permanent enough to undertake long-term studies. Fels Institute and Berkeley, however, began systematic longitudinal studies.
- Behavioral and emotional development—Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Minnesota, California, and Washington University (St. Louis) studied children’s fears, specifically how emotions arise and how fears are learned and unlearned. This was an outgrowth of Watson’s research at Johns Hopkins.
- Growth and physical maturation—Early research at Iowa addressed the physical development, care, and feeding of children. Gesell at Yale made graphs of normal development for use in identifying atypical development. The Fels Institute examined relationships between physical and behavioral development.
- Research methods—John Anderson and Goodenough at Minnesota, among others, saw the need for better observational research techniques. Goodenough explored new ways of assessing personality and intelligence (including her Draw-A-Person test).

Most of the work at the newly founded institutes focused on the pragmatic question of how to best raise children and the methodological issues of how to study children. Major theoretical development was left to others.

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Classroom Discourse

Classroom discourse is the vehicle through which much of the teaching and learning occurs in educational settings. It consists of the communications system that teachers set up to carry out educational functions and maintain social relationships. The discourse between teachers and children includes spoken language and nonverbal gestures and facial expressions that are connected to each other in the flow of talk. A guiding principle in considering discourse is that teacher and student comments cannot be analyzed in isolation from each other or the larger classroom culture.

Classroom discourse is the means by which children gain access to the **curriculum**. Activities alone cannot help the child construct understandings without accompanying teacher–child interactions that help the child make connections to his or her world of ideas. To learn, students must use what they already know so as to give meaning to new ideas in the curriculum. The young child uses her language to construct her own understanding about what is going on. When children give voice to their ideas, their speech makes their interpretations visible to themselves and others, facilitating their ability to relate new knowledge to old. But this potential new learning depends on how the teacher structures the learning dialogue

Careful examination of classroom discourse magnifies the actual teacher–child encounter and enables the observer to see the dynamic nature of teaching, in which teachers and children influence and become environments for each other and the activity changes from minute to minute as the interaction proceeds. In this way curriculum is much more than or sometimes even different from what teachers plan in advance. Teachers' and children's responses to each other during classroom discourse play a powerful role in determining what is actually taught and what is actually learned.

The actual (as opposed to the intended) curriculum consists in the meanings enacted or realized by a particular teacher and class . . . On the basis of the cues, people in interaction develop an idea of what the context is at the moment; in a sense they define the context. Because in the course of the on-going interaction, the context may change from moment to moment, their definition of context may also change. It is partly because of these momentary definitions that people are able to know and decide what is going on. How they shape their discourse shows what they really understand the task to be: what they do shows they understand what is going on. (Erikson and Schultz, 1981, p. 62)

Curriculum, within this perspective, is an evolving process created through reciprocal interactions as the teacher attempts to make the child a partner in the discourse. Children in early childhood classrooms are struggling to refine their

own language, and simultaneously learn how to participate in the classroom dialogue and use that dialogue to understand curriculum content and social relationships.

The study of classroom discourse has its roots in the research on teaching as a linguistic process and the influence of anthropologists on making the study of language relevant to classroom practice. Dell Hymes (1972) was one of the first to highlight the importance of studying language as embedded in the social context of the classroom. Courtney Cazden (1986, 2001) further inspired and shaped this field of study.

Green (1983) offers the following five constructs that characterize classroom discourse:

1. Face to face interactions between teachers and children are governed by context specific rules.
2. Activities in classrooms have participation structures with rights and obligations for participation. Contextualization cues are the verbal and nonverbal cues that signal how utterances are to be understood and inferencing is required for conversational comprehension. Rules for participation are often implicit, conveyed and learned through the interaction itself.
3. Meaning is context specific.
4. Frames of reference are developed over time and guide individual participation.
5. Complex communicative demands are placed on both teachers and students by the diversity of communicative structures.

Teachers establish participation rules specific to their own classrooms. Teachers may communicate rules orally or with the way they look at a child, a gesture (hands on hips, pointing), or by maintaining or breaking eye contact. For children to participate successfully in a classroom dialogue, they need to develop communicative competence—understanding how to participate in that particular setting and the ability to use that knowledge in the process of communicating. For example, children must learn the rules about taking turns, acceptable ways of getting into the discussion (getting the floor) and staying in the conversation (keeping the floor).

These participation rules often change when a child moves to another classroom, as illustrated by the variety of acceptable ways children have of “getting the floor,” for example, by nomination (child gets a turn when teacher calls her name), calling out (child allowed to talk when she has an idea about the topic), hand raising (child raises hand and waits until called on), going around the circle or passing a “talk object,” or being quiet and sitting still—“I’m waiting to see who’s sitting still and being quiet.”

Traditional and Nontraditional Discourse

The most commonly practiced discourse pattern remains the IRE (teacher initiation, child responds to teacher, teacher evaluates response as right or wrong). For example:

Teacher: What are the three things a plant needs to grow?

Child: Sun.

Teacher: Right.

One feature of classroom life highlighted in this discourse pattern is the inequality of power between teachers and children. In traditional classroom discourse the teacher generally does most of the talking and controls *all* talk by deciding who speaks and when, regaining the floor after each student turn. In the traditional pattern the teacher asks for the correct answer (usually one word), and, if given an incorrect answer, corrects the child, moves onto another child, or disapproves the answer in some way, essentially cutting off the discussion after the correct answer is uttered. The teacher can interrupt the child at any time and usually waits only a few seconds for a response. In this discourse pattern, the teacher typically uses a specialized kind of talk that is particular to and may only have meaning in the classroom. This conventionalized way of speaking in classrooms is known as the teacher-talk register. Most teachers employ some or all of this conventional talk form. For example, a teacher says “Excuse me” to control or reprimand a misbehaving child and uses test questions that are not genuine questions because the teacher already knows the answer (see example above). Analyses of teacher talk categorize these questions as lower level questions because they require little thinking or language to answer; they can be answered with one word, often by repeating the teacher’s words or reiterating simple facts learned previously.

This discourse style best matches a theory of learning that considers the transmission of facts from teacher to child as the best way for children to acquire knowledge. The goal of the discourse is to get specific words from the curriculum spoken in the “official classroom talk.”

In the past three decades teachers (particularly those in early childhood classrooms) have begun to use nontraditional discourse styles, due to the growing awareness of the how classroom discourse style influences knowledge construction. In nontraditional classroom discourse, there is an emphasis on making the student a more significant part of the official learning environment based on the idea that children are shapers of their own knowledge and must have many opportunities to do so in the learning dialogue. Increasingly, teachers share power with the children and attempt to make each child a more equal partner in the discourse. In this form of classroom discourse, the teacher does not continually control who is allowed to speak and expects, and often promotes, more child talk than teacher talk. The children are encouraged to initiate talk and express their own ideas and the teacher builds on the information and experiences of the children as well as provides new information. The teacher accepts alternative answers and children are asked to elaborate on their responses.

In this more contemporary classroom, the teacher tries to implement discourse practices that are intended to create a community of learners which children are asked to listen to and learn from their peers as well as the teacher. With a focus on genuine inquiry (as opposed to test questions), nontraditional discourse resembles discussions where children are invited to contribute ideas and engage in collaborative problem solving; and encouraged, when necessary, to disagree with classmates or the teacher. The potentials of this non-traditional discourse practice are illustrated in the following example as kindergarten children discuss Leo Lionni’s book *Tico and the Golden Wings*:

Teacher: I don’t think it’s fair that Tico has to give up his golden wings.

Lisa: It is fair. See he was nicer when he didn't have any wings. They didn't like him when he had gold.

Wally: He thinks he's better if he has golden wings.

Eddie: He is better.

Jill: But he's not supposed to be better. The wishing bird was wrong to give him those wings.

Deanna: She has to give him his wings. He's the one who shouldn't have asked for golden wings.

Wally: He could put black wings on top of the golden wings and try to trick them.

Deanna: They'd just sneak up and see the gold. He should just give every bird one gold feather and keep one for himself.

Teacher: Why can't he decide for himself what wings he wants?

(Cazden, 2001, p. 83)

In this discussion of fairness, the turn taking is managed and initiated by the children without the teacher controlling who speaks. They listen to and build on each others' ideas. The teacher and children coconstruct the text as they present and defend their points of view. In the participation structure established in this classroom the children are free to disagree with the teacher. They are equal partners in determining the direction of the discussion. The teacher promotes cognitive development by putting the children's voices in the foreground and asking them to reflect on and state their own ideas. They become the meaning makers. The teacher gains insight into their ability to understand and analyze the text as well as their skill in using language. Of course these types of conversations also influence children's social development as they learn of and debate the merits of different points of view.

Educational researchers have examined the kinds of questions teachers use in the classroom as they influence cognitive and linguistic demands and learning opportunities. Results of such studies suggest that open ended questions and questions that create discrepancies, pose contradictions, and require shifts of perspective are the more cognitively and communicatively demanding, usually involving evaluation or synthesis of information since there are typically many possible answers to these questions. The kinds of classroom conversations where children are asked to recall experiences outside the educational setting are also important because they require children to distance themselves in time and space from the present. Thinking about past or future events requires a mental presentation of what has happened to the child at an earlier time or of what may happen and thus require more cognitive effort and more complex language than is necessary when describing what is immediately observable.

Form Versus Function and Different Patterns of Language

Two features of nontraditional classroom discourse are (1) the movement from a focus on the form to the function of language and (2) the recognition of the need to address what anthropologist Shirley Brice Heath (1983) calls culturally distinctive "ways with words."

Beginning in the 1970s educators, and sociolinguists focused attention on discourse in preschool classrooms and set the stage for growth in preschool discourse

practices (Genishi and Dyson, 1984; Halliday, 1975; Tough, 1976). At the time many early language programs focused teachers primarily on syntax, phonology, morphology—how the language looks and sounds, the *form* of language—rather than on how well a child was able to use language to convey meanings and relate successfully to peers and his teachers—the *functions* of language. Classroom discourse was characterized by correcting children’s grammatical errors and by teacher modeling and children repeating linguistic forms based on the premise that their knowledge of language was inadequate. However, studies of three to five-year-olds from low socioeconomic and minority backgrounds found that rather than having an inadequate knowledge of the language (as some educators and linguists assumed), these children were disposed to use language differently. Their interactions within family and communities often did not match the ways that language was used in educational settings. The resulting lack of mutual comprehension between the teacher and child in the discourse interferes with the verbal and cognitive growth the teacher may seek and of which the children are capable.

While both form and function are integrated and necessary in communication, these studies suggested that if teachers responded to what children were saying and how they were able to use language in the process of interacting (the functions of language), both children’s learning and communication skills would improve. Tough (1976) and others (Genishi and Dyson, 1984; Halliday, 1975) developed tools for assessing language use in the classroom that help teachers to reconceptualize their role in the discourse; and assist children to convey meaning more effectively. Teachers could document the complexity of children’s thinking and gain useful information about how young children use their language to interpret experiences. Instead of asking for one-word “labels” for objects or pictures in a book, teachers asked children to use language to perform a variety of functions such as describe what happened in a book, report on their experiences, provide explanations, reflect on reasons or predict outcomes of events.

Current curriculum standards and pedagogical practice in early childhood education builds and expands on these ideas as illustrated in the expectations for early childhood professionals by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) and other professional resources. Strategies are offered to help infant/toddler and preschool teachers lay the foundation for conversations, foster peer interactions, and help children become more equal partners in the discourse (Weitzman and Greenberg, 2002). *Standards for Speaking and Listening* (2001) outlines the kinds of talk we should expect from children preschool through the third grade and describes how teachers can help children participate successfully in the classroom dialogue. The National Council of Teachers in Mathematics, a discipline previously noted for its traditional discourse pattern, has also issued guidelines calling for the teacher of math to promote classroom discourse in which students listen to, respond to, and question the teacher and one another, initiate problems and questions, and explain how they arrived at math answers. Reflecting premises of **social constructivism** and **sociocultural theory**, teachers are now asked to co-construct the science curriculum with children, framing the discussion around children’s questions and responses. The **Reggio Emilia**

program is the most prominent early childhood education approach where the child becomes the meaning maker and the classroom dialogue is used to help children unpack their knowledge so that it is available for review and further symbolic representation.

In classrooms characterized by **teacher research** and portfolio **assessment**, teachers will use transcripts of small group dialogues and children's reasoning in problem-solving tasks to understand their science learning (Gallas, 1995). This form of **documentation** allows educators to gain a better understanding of individual development and the nature of shared knowledge being constructed by children in the classroom. Studying classroom discourse also helps teachers become more reflective practitioners, giving them a valuable tool to study and improve their own practice. "There is no other way that is as honest and powerful as a transcript to take you back to that moment in time, and bring everyone else back to that moment . . . allow an outsider to pay close attention to the words of a particular classroom" (Cazden, 2001, pp. 6, 7). Recording the voices of children within the curriculum discourse also validates children as they come to see that their ideas are valued and play a key role in the curriculum as meaning-makers (Wells, in Cazden, 2001). The growing popularity of the idea of *accountable talk* asks that students make use of specific and accurate knowledge, justify claims, use rational strategies to present arguments and be accountable to each other by listening attentively and asking for clarification (Resnick, in Cazden, 2001). In this sense, respect for children's talk can help children learn to be more respectful and responsible citizens in the classroom.

Most early childhood teachers favor non-traditional discourse styles, although varying degrees of traditional classroom discourse can be still in observed in early education settings. Teachers in public elementary schools and federally funded programs, many of whom feel constrained by the **No Child Left Behind Act** accountability and high-stakes testing, are more prone to employ traditional strategies in their discourse. But classroom discourse in early childhood settings has changed significantly in the past three decades as teachers recognize the importance of creating a space for children to have a voice, to become full partners in classrooms. As more teachers use the educational dialogue to support the dynamic and reciprocal nature of teaching and learning, non-traditional classroom discourse will become the tradition. *See also* Curriculum, Science; Development, Social; Symbolic Languages.

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Classroom Environments

A classroom environment in early childhood education settings involves a space where young children have opportunities to interact with each other and adults and engage in meaningful activities that nurture aspects of a child's development (i.e., sensori-motor, cognitive, social-emotional, and/or communication development) through the direction of teachers, parents and other adults. This type of environment involves many features. One of these features is the physical structure of the environment; for example, size, walls, flooring, windows, lighting, doors, color and texture. Another feature includes the objects within the space; for example, toys, books, manipulatives, children's works, moveable furniture, plants, and decorative stuff. The final feature is the arrangement and organization of these structures, objects and activities within the space. The space of a classroom environment could be located within a school, center, home, workplace, or a religious setting. Although outside space is considered to be part of the classroom environment, the majority of activities usually occur inside of a physical structure. Greenman (1988) states,

An environment is a living, changing system. More than the physical space, it indicates the way time is structured and the roles we are expected to play. It conditions how we feel, think, and behave; and it dramatically affects the quality of our lives. (p. 5)

As children spend increasingly more time in classrooms, the quality of these classrooms is critical in strengthening children's foundational development. Greenman calls for putting "childhood" back into the classroom and making it a place for children to fall in love with the world and make sense of life's complexities, mysteries and joys.

Theories and Approaches

Although two classrooms may look alike as to their physical structure, the total classroom environments will be distinct from each other according to their inhabitants and philosophies of the curriculum. In each classroom the children's backgrounds, ages, ethnicity, gender, and developmental levels as well as the teacher's personality and training help to comprise the classroom environment.

Each classroom can be simulated to having its own culture reflected in the customary actions, beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes of the children and teacher(s) as they engage in the everyday life of the classroom (Green, Dixon, and Zaharlick, 2003).

Theories that contribute to diverse classroom environments focus on the qualities and conditions of children's development and learning. These theories potentially influence the organization of the classroom, selection of materials, the curriculum, and teaching approaches. The importance of environment in children's lives is stressed by a wide spectrum of theorists from behaviorism (e.g., B. F. Skinner) to constructivism (e.g., Jean Piaget) and social constructivism (e.g., Lev Vygotsky). Some classroom environments reflect the use of positive behavioral supports stemming from research conducted in the field of applied behavior analysis. The classroom environment may involve intervention efforts that "minimize and prevent the occurrence of challenging behavior in children through the management of antecedent conditions that occasion these behaviors and through the teaching of alternative behaviors and skills" (Wheeler, 2000, p. 73). Jean Piaget emphasizes the activities and materials within the classroom as a vehicle for children developing their knowledge while Vygotsky focuses on the classroom environment as a space that creates zones of proximal development for children to develop through their play and social interactions with their peers and adults.

Other theorists consider the broader societal context as part of children's learning and development through their contributions of general systems theory and ecological psychology. Dunkin and Biddle (1974) were among the first theorists to conceptualize the classroom as a system consisting of events influenced by specific variables, both in and outside of the classroom, referred to as presage and context variables. Presage variables are associated with teacher characteristics that would be considered part of teacher identity (e.g., teacher preparation program, their formative experiences, and personality). Context variables are associated with the classroom children's backgrounds and abilities as well as the school, community, and classroom contexts. These events presume a causative relationship that produces immediate and long-term outcomes for the children.

More recently, researchers in early childhood education have described quality of early childhood settings in terms of structure and process. Structural quality includes the interrelationship between group size, staff-child ratios, and teacher qualifications—otherwise known as "the iron triangle"—in helping to determine children's development. Social relationships and interactions within the early childhood environment describe process quality. Children are more apt to have positive developmental outcomes with sensitive, trained/educated teachers who know their children's strengths and needs; and how to promote their learning (Kagan and Nevman, 1996).

Bronfenbrenner's theory of the **ecology of human development**, expanded the influences of the societal context and reinterpreted the child's interaction with the environment as an active process. In this model, the child is perceived as part of nested systems that directly or indirectly affect learning and development. The child's immediate surroundings (e.g., family and classroom) are his microsystem. These microsystems in a child's life form a connected network known as

the mesosystem. Children are more likely to thrive when families and schools are working together to support their learning. Another layer is the exosystem that includes the parents' workplace, social organizations, and other institutions. These exosystems may have minimal if any contact with the child but they influence the child's microsystem by the type of assistance they provide to families and schools. Exosystems exist within the context of cultural belief systems and behavior patterns known as macrosystems. And finally, the chronosystem represents the patterning of environmental events and transition over the life course (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

These theoretical interpretations of environmental spaces suggest a number of questions to consider before designing and organizing a setting for children: What are the strengths and needs of the children, their interests, their development levels, their cultural backgrounds (including their family structures, socioeconomic status and ethnicity)? Other questions focus on the learning philosophy of the program or the local community, including specific goals for the children as well as plans for how to incorporate those goals within the curriculum. Content standards, **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** goals and specific learning initiatives or mandated "best practices" will also influence decisions about the design of the classroom in promoting children's growth and development.

Qualities of Effective and Safe Early Childhood Environments

Although classroom environments will be distinct from each other, shared values from the local and mainstream cultures have contributed to policies and position statements that help to define the quality of classroom environments for young children. Some of these shared values include designing an environment (a) for children of varying developmental levels, (b) where all children are safe and feel secure, (c) that promotes a community of learners, and (d) that nurtures aspects of children's development.

Since the 1970s, there has been a focus on designing a classroom environment for children of diverse developmental levels. In these inclusive classrooms, **children with disabilities** learn alongside their typically developing peers. For example, children may be using wheelchairs while others are walking from one part of the classroom to another; children may be verbal or use gestures as their primary modes of communication with their peers and teachers. Children may be drawing while others are writing their stories. It is an environment where strengths are recognized in each child and children learn at their own pace. A classroom that includes children of approximately the same chronological age who are typically developing as well as those having certified disabilities is described as the child's natural environment in Part C of **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA, 1997)**.

While having some accommodations, these settings are designed in a manner that is natural or normal for a child's age peers. For example, principles of Universal Design have been used to accommodate children of varying developmental levels. The premise underlying Universal Design is that the physical structure and layout of the classroom, instructional materials and activities, equipment, communications and other resources are designed from the start for maximum usability

to the greatest possible extent without the need for adaptation or specialized design. This design seeks to offer a flexible curriculum and learning environment where all children have the opportunity to access the general curriculum and achieve the academic content standards that have been established for all students. Students have a range of options for learning that includes multiple means of (a) presentation of information to students, (b) expression by students, and (c) engagement for students (Bremer et al., 2002).

Another shared value involves designing an environment where each child feels safe and secure to explore materials, use equipment, engage in activities and interact with others in a manner that will prevent undue risk to their physical, mental and social well-being and contribute to their whole development. The floor plan is arranged where there is adequate room for children to freely move around equipment and furniture without having to compete for space with other children. Equipment, furniture and materials/toys are durable, in good repair and inspected for safety features. In this type of space children are free from environmental hazards and have adequate lighting to learn from their setting. Positive social interaction is promoted through a well-designed classroom in order to resolve conflict and protect the interpersonal safety of those present. This type of space allows children to be alone or with others while always being monitored by adults to ensure their safety.

Another shared value reflected in classroom management and overall early childhood curricula involves classrooms being constructed in a manner where children and teachers have a sense of belonging to the classroom as well as to the local community. Creating a welcoming, calming, home-like space that's represented in the selection of furnishings, textures/materials, lighting and colors are important factors in creating a "community of learners." The concept of "community of learners" is an important goal for classroom environments that promotes a positive attitude toward learning, prosocial behavior, and a mutual respect for others. Lists of criteria, guidelines, and assessments established to research and evaluate these and other features of quality classroom environments can be found in a variety of **environmental assessments**. For example, quality measures in the NICHD Study of Early Child Care included the extent to which the classroom space was uncrowded and uncluttered, the environment and equipment were clean and safe, a variety of developmentally appropriate toys and materials were available and play areas were protected and quiet (NICHD, 2005).

While there is broad consensus and empirical support for this list of qualities for an optimal environment for young children, environments for young children reflect more than shared understandings about how and what children should learn. They also reflect the teachers' personal and professional well-being. Teachers have a more pleasant personality when they work in an aesthetically pleasing environment, have space to plan, relax and develop their thinking about children's learning with other teachers and their children's families. In addition, environments reflect the values and beliefs of the adult members of the community about the nature of childhood. Some early childhood classrooms have been inspired by the municipal early childhood schools in the Italian city of **Reggio Emilia**, where each classroom reflects cultural influences through the beautification, the personal space, and materials from the local cultural community. In Reggio Emilia classrooms, the walls include the children's own work—carefully and purposefully

displayed drawings, sculptures and mobiles. The classroom environment is viewed as another teacher in the class, such that an appropriate design is like a coach who helps, guides, and serves children, thus facilitating their development (Gandini, 2002). The classroom environment is designed to encourage choices, discoveries, and communication; it is an open environment that facilitates interaction among parents, teachers and children, and supports children's collaborative exploration (New, 2004).

A growing number of early childhood educators in the United States and elsewhere are taking inspiration from Reggio Emilia and other Italian early childhood programs to consider the powerful influence of the image of children and childhood shaping early childhood environments. The relationship between this image and the nature of the environment is readily apparent in U.S. classrooms. For instance, when children are viewed as untrustworthy or mischievous, the environment and classroom materials will likely be arranged differently than when they are seen as eager to learn and deserving to feel powerful in their environment. When the primary focus is on health and safety and school readiness, the environment may have easy-to-clean plastic furniture and easy-to-store commercial learning materials and displays. A belief that children should stay involved and engaged with the natural world might be reflected in more windows, outdoor spaces, and ample use of natural materials and products such as woven baskets, shells and stones on wooden shelves. A belief in children's ideas as being worth sharing and reflecting upon might be expressed through walls covered with feature photo stories of the children's questions and pursuits. A belief in the value of aesthetics and surprise may appear in the form of a new plant or a work of art, additions to the classroom justified by their contributions to the space as a place to be shared by adults and children over the course of many hours each day. Teachers in child-care settings across the United States are now considering the classroom environment as a mirror in which to examine their values and beliefs about children; and to create new designs for living and learning (Curtis and Carter, 2003). Gandini (1984) calls for transforming physical settings into "particular" places that represent the individual voices of its inhabitants and its surrounding community. Within a context of increasing standardization of children's early learning experiences, this interpretation of the environment goes beyond that of protecting and teaching children; the environment takes on an advocacy role for children's rights and adult responsibilities. *See also* Inclusion, Reggio Emilia Approach.

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Laurie Katz and Hatice Zeynep Inan

Comenius, John Amos (1592–1670)

John Amos Comenius (Komensky) was a seventeenth-century religious leader, teacher, scholar, and author. His writings on education anticipated themes evident in the work of Johann **Pestalozzi** and Friedrich **Froebel** in the nineteenth century, stressing the importance of early learning and the need to match **pedagogy** to children's development.

Comenius was born in Bohemia, a region in central Europe that is now part of the Czech Republic. He was a member of a Protestant group called the Unity of Moravian Brethren, and his life and writings were guided by his religious beliefs. He was orphaned at an early age and raised by his aunt. Educated first at a local school organized by the church, an experience he remembered as uninspiring, he later attended university and underwent preparation as a pastor of the Moravian Church. He proceeded to work as a teacher and serve the church until his life was disrupted by the events of the Thirty Years' War. Members of the church including Comenius and his family were driven from Bohemia and his wife and two children died during their exile.

While in exile Comenius was appointed bishop of the Moravian Church and it was during this period that he wrote the major works that comprise his legacy in the field of early childhood education, including *Orbis Pictus* (Comenius, 1968), an illustrated textbook, and *School of Infancy* (Comenius, 1896), which described the home-based and mother-led education of children under the age of six. Comenius described early childhood as a unique life stage. Experience was critical in shaping development, with those under age 6 more malleable than older children. Parents were responsible for educating their children in a rational manner, attending to their spiritual understanding, moral development, and knowledge gained through appropriate experiences. A measure of what was

deemed appropriate was found in the study of a child's nature. Parents were encouraged to promote joyful learning through children's inclination to play and to make opportunities for their involvement in daily routines appropriate to their age. Comenius described young children as learning best through direct contact with the world of things. Specific activities were recommended at each age in relation to subject areas, including **mathematics**, geometry, drawing, and writing.

Comenius's views on education, described more expansively in his *Pampaedi* (Comenius, 1986) and the *Great Didactic* (Comenius, 1967), were influenced by his experience as a student and teacher, and by his religious beliefs and panoptic worldview. Knowledge in this case was a unitary expression of science, philosophy, and theology gained through a system of universal education over the lifespan, beginning with a prenatal stage and ending in a school for old age. Education for children over age 6 was envisioned as an orderly undertaking led by efficient pedagogues using a common method and following a set **curriculum**.

Comenius's vision for early childhood education was largely neglected until revived by Froebel in the **kindergarten**, an institution that promoted the developmental aims of education and the religious and moral purpose of early schooling in an out-of-home setting led by female teachers. *See also* Curriculum, Science.

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Larry Prochner

Computer and Video Game Play in Early Childhood

Computer and video games are becoming increasingly present in young children's lives. According to a national early childhood study in the United States, 70 percent of children between the ages of four and six years have used a computer, and 56 percent have used a computer without sitting on a parent's lap. Eighteen percent of children age 6 and under use a computer on a daily basis, and 9 percent play video games on a daily basis. This figure includes 11 percent of children age 2 and under who use a computer on a daily basis and 3 percent who play video games on a daily basis (Rideout, Vandewater, and Wartella, 2003).

With most forms of play media, the essence of the game exists in the interactions between the players and the physical media—blocks, sticks, dolls, pinecones, paints, etc. Unlike most forms of play media, the essence of computer and video games exists in the interactions between the players and the nontangible experiences that are facilitated by the hardware and software, rather

than the hardware and software themselves (Salonius-Pasternak and Gelfond, 2005). This lack of physical media is of particular interest and concern for young children.

Types of Games

Several category systems exist for describing different types of computer and video games. The following categories are used by game designers and incorporate the language often used by the players themselves:

- Real Time Strategy (RTS)
- First-Person Shooters (FPS)
- Empire Builders
- Simulations
- Role Playing Games (RPG)
- Massively Multiplayer Role Playing Games (MMRPG)
- Sports
- Puzzles
- “Edutainment”

These games can be played on computers, consoles, and smaller mobile devices, that is, phones, PDAs, and dedicated game players like Nintendo’s GameBoy (Scarlett et al., 2004).

Electronic Play for Infants and Toddlers

Electronic play is progressively being developed and marketed toward younger children, even infants. Most software designed for infants is referred to as “lapware,” which is geared toward parents and infants using the programs together. However, other than the social interaction and physical contact with their parents, it is unclear whether this kind of play has any other value (Scarlett et al., 2004). Most early childhood educators believe that young children benefit from interactions with people and objects that can respond directly to children’s initiatives—characteristics that are not easily available in programmed electronics. In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has stated that children under the age of twenty-four months should not watch television, since crucial aspects of brain development during this time seem to rely on more tangible play experiences. The AAP has also recommended that children over the age of twenty-four months should not be exposed to screen media for more than two hours each day (AAP, 1999).

There is perhaps more potential for toddlers over the age of twenty-four months to experience some benefits from electronic play. Toddlers’ cognitive capabilities are expanding to include the ability to use and recognize various forms of symbolic representations. This ability seems to be a basic requirement for electronic play because so much of electronic play has to do with appreciating the meaning of images or symbols. Time will tell whether enhanced programming and design can truly provide special advantages for toddlers. However, right now, there does not seem to be any special advantages of electronic play over traditional types of toddler play. What is clear is that the benefits of sociodramatic and constructive play are not easily incorporated into toddlers’ electronic play.

In addition, there are concerns that electronic play for toddlers may only serve as a negative distraction. An important developmental task for toddlers is the development of a sense of self, which allows them to recognize that they are separate from others and separate from the world around them. The world of electronic play may be too sophisticated for these young children, who are still unclear about boundaries between themselves and the physical world around them, let alone a world of depicted illusions.

Electronic Play for Preschoolers

Preschool children have the cognitive ability to engage in make-believe, which gives them greater access to the play worlds of computer and video games. They can imitate models that are not present and are theorized to find, in their play, multiple ways to represent the reality of the world around them as well as the inner reality of their interpretations. Their play tends to focus on construction through a variety of play media—building forts with blocks, drawing, or painting pictures of home life—and the use of **narratives** in creating stories using dolls about fairly elaborate fantasy worlds. They can engage in all kinds of play requiring symbolizing, organizing, and planning—both alone and in cooperation with others. These capabilities may begin to allow them access to some of the beneficial aspects of computer and video games.

In spite of this perceived readiness for playful engagement with video games and computers, most of those designed for preschoolers fall into the category of Edutainment and focus on academic aspects of school **readiness**. Although this may be enjoyable or beneficial for some children, it is important to remember that these games do not necessarily include opportunities to construct or create new worlds; nor even to develop motor skills, which is another important area of development for young children. Preschoolers are focusing on developing fine- and gross motor skills through physical exploration, which also helps to facilitate their cognitive development, as they begin to make sense of the world around them. More tangible types of play media, that is, wooden blocks rather than electronic play, may be better suited to these particular goals. While most types of computer or console games provide children with an opportunity to practice hand-eye coordination, they also tend to exclude gross motor skills. In addition, these games may limit children's exploration to specific activities that are determined by the software and input devices, whereas virtually the only factor that limits children's exploration of wooden blocks is their own imagination. Furthermore, some parents and teachers believe that learning important concepts through everyday, "real-life" experiences provides a richer cognitive experience for preschoolers because this learning takes place within a naturally occurring environment. However, a natural environment does not insure a richer cognitive experience any more than a video game entails something less than beneficial. While concerns about excess time spent with computers and video games are real, their potentially negative effects should not be exaggerated. Children typically do not exclusively play video games. Instead, playing video games is typically only one of many activities that children engage in; and thus, video games, when appropriate and controlled, might complement, rather than replace, other types of activities suitable for young children.

Conclusions

In considering both the potential benefits and the possible risks that may be associated with young children playing computer and video games, it is important to note that these forms of technology in the lives of young children represent a relatively new and complex phenomenon. Many of the studies that have been conducted so far in this area of research have found inconclusive or inconsistent results. In addition, debates are frequent among several differing perspectives represented by parents, educators, and researchers. Where there is agreement, it is in the opinion that, although computer use and video games provide some potential benefits, they should not replace other types of children's social, physical, and cognitive activities such as outdoor play, constructive play, and dramatic play. Instead, computers and video games should be among many activities in which children engage, as a complement to rather than substitute for other, more physical and interactive activities. To continue our inquiry and expand our understanding in both research and applied settings, it will be important to keep an open mind to the potentials of children's uses of these and other technologies. It will also be important, when studying young children's use of computer and video games, to consider both individual and contextual factors that may play a role in shaping the influences of electronic play on child development and early learning. *See also* Academics; Symbolic Languages; Curriculum, Technology.

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Dorothy E. Warner

Constructionism

During the last thirty years, the role that computers and other computer-based technologies play in education has grown dramatically. Koshmann (1996), borrowing from Kuhn's notion of scientific paradigms, identified four major paradigms in the evolution of educational technologies: computer-assisted instruction, intelligent tutoring systems, constructionism and computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL). Each of these paradigms contains different pedagogical and methodological approaches to conceive and to integrate computer-based technology in the teaching and learning process.

Constructionism might best be defined as a constructivist philosophy for educational technologies. Constructionism asserts that computers are powerful educational technologies when used as tools for supporting the design, the construction, and the programming of personally and epistemologically meaningful projects (Papert, 1980; Resnick et al., 1996). By constructing an external object to reflect upon, people also construct internal knowledge.

Constructionism is situated in the intellectual trajectory started in the 1960s by the MIT Logo Group, under the direction of Seymour Papert, based first at the Artificial Intelligence laboratory at MIT and later at the MIT Media Laboratory. Although the Logo Group members held many different research agendas and goals, the collective vision of the group rested primarily on at least four major pillars (Bers et al., 2002).

First, the group believed in the constructionist approach to education. Strongly based on Piaget's constructivism, Papert's theory of constructionism emphasizes the need for technological environments to help children learn by doing, by actively inquiring, and by playing. The interaction with the technological materials around them provides children the opportunity to design and make meaningful projects to share with a community.

Second, the group understood the importance of objects for supporting the development of concrete ways of thinking and learning about abstract phenomena. In this context, computers acquired a salient role as powerful tools to design, create, and manipulate objects in both the real and the virtual world. The group envisioned this technology existing not only in the form of current desktop computers, but also as tiny computers embedded in Lego-bricks that could be programmed to move and respond to stimulus gathered by touch or light sensors (Bers et al., 2002; Martin et al., 2000).

Third, the group valued the notion that powerful ideas empower the individual. Powerful ideas afford individuals new ways of thinking, new ways of putting knowledge to use, and new ways of making personal and epistemological connections with other domains of knowledge (Papert, 2000). Constructionists envision the computer as a powerful carrier of new ideas and particularly as an agent of educational change.

Fourth, the group embraced the premium of self-reflection. The best learning experiences occur when individuals are encouraged to explore their own thinking process and their intellectual and emotional relationship to knowledge, as well as the personal history that affects the learning experience. Constructionism viewed the programming of a computer as a powerful way to gain new insights into how the mind works and learns (Papert, 1993).

Papert's constructionism became widespread in the world of education in 1980 with the publication of his pioneering book *Mindstorms: Children, computers and powerful ideas* (Papert, 1980). In *Mindstorms*, Papert advocated for providing children with an opportunity to become computer programmers as a way to learn about mathematics and, more importantly, to learn about learning. Papert argued that using a child-friendly version of the programming language LISP, called Logo or the language of the turtle, was an easy and natural way to engage students in programming. Logo allowed students to actively create artifacts in a process of discovery-based learning—a process directly aligned with the cognitive constructivist model of learning. Although Papert was one of the key researchers involved in the first implementations of Logo, the benefits of programming, in Papert's view, would extend far beyond the world of Logo. Through the process of designing and debugging computer programs, students would develop a metacognitive approach toward problem-solving and learning.

By now there is a long-standing constructionist tradition of authoring tools and programming environments that follow the Logo steps. Some of these technological environments are designed for children's learning about mathematics and science (Harel and Papert, 1990; Kafai, 1994; Resnick et al., 1996, 2000), for creating virtual communities to foster peer learning and collaboration (Bruckman, 1998; Resnick et al., 1996), and for designing computational environments to promote positive youth development through storytelling (Bers, 2001). Other constructionist approaches focus on creating social environments in which constructionist types of learning activities using technologies can happen (Resnick, Rusk, and Cooke, 1998).

Constructionism is rooted in Jean Piaget's constructivism, in which learning is best characterized as an individual cognitive process given a social and cultural context. However, while Piaget's theory was developed to explain how knowledge is constructed in our heads, Papert pays particular attention to the role of constructions in the world as a support for those in the head. Thus, constructionism is both a theory of learning and a strategy for education. It offers the framework for developing a technology-rich design-based learning environment, in which learning happens best when learners are engaged in learning by making, creating, programming, discovering, and designing their own "objects to think with" in a playful manner.

Although constructionism has both theoretical and practical limitations, namely the lack of theoretical conceptualization of the role of **sociocultural theory** in designing learning environments and the difficulties of applying constructionism in formal institutions such as schools (Papert and Harel, 1991), more recent developments within the constructionist paradigm, such as social constructionism, cultural constructionism, and sociocultural constructionism extend the notion of constructionism to encompass sociocultural theories.

Contemporary perspectives of constructionism encompass a philosophy and theory of learning that synthesizes the understanding of the learning process as a result of an individual's cognitive self-organization and participation in socially and culturally organized practices. Therefore, a constructionist learning environment is one that gives the individual the freedom to explore natural interests using new technologies, with the support of a community of learners that can facilitate deeper understanding.

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Marina Umaschi Bers

Constructivism

Early childhood educators generally agree that constructivism is a theory of how children learn by building or *constructing* knowledge from the inside rather than by internalizing it directly from the environment. As stated by Bredo (2000, p. 128), however, "constructivism is both diverse and moving. The fact that the term has become so popular and used in such differing and changing ways makes its meaning uncertain." For some people, constructivism is an epistemological theory; for others it is a philosophy of education, or a psychological theory about how children learn. Still others incorporate constructivism into a theory called "social constructivism" that states that knowledge is socially created.

In the field of early childhood education, constructivism can be divided into two broad categories—(a) as a philosophy of education about how best to teach children and (b) as a psychological and/or epistemological theory explaining how children learn (with some also attending to teaching as well as learning). Each of the two categories has something to offer teachers of young children.

Constructivism as a Philosophy of Education

The idea that students build knowledge from within is as old as Socrates. An example of contemporary constructivism as a particular pedagogical approach is outlined in the text, *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms* (Brooks and Brooks, 1999). The authors identify what they describe as constructivist principles of teaching, such as teaching by posing problems of emerging relevance to students, by seeking and valuing students' points of view, and by adapting curriculum to address students' suppositions (p. ix). In support of these principles, many of which are in opposition to traditional transmission models of teaching, the authors cite scholars and philosophers of education such as Bruner, Dewey, Eisner, Gardner, Goodlad, Goodman, Graves, David Hawkins, Katz and Chard, Loevinger, Piaget, Inhelder, Slavin, Vygotsky, and others. These authors' philosophies of education differ from the traditional belief in transmitting

knowledge to students in ready-made, well-organized form in which good teaching is believed to consist of presenting facts and interpretations, giving exercises, reinforcing correct answers, and correcting incorrect responses.

Constructivism as a philosophy of education appears in the work of many scholars in literacy education, several of whom were constructivists before constructivism became popular. Bissex (1980), Chomsky (1979), Goodman and Goodman (1979), and Smith (1978) are all examples of constructivists who view children's acquisition of knowledge as a process from the inside. Constructivism as a philosophy of education has especially influenced reforms in **mathematics** education as can be seen in *Cognitively Guided Instruction* (Carpenter et al., 1999), *Developing Number Concepts* (Richardson, 1999), and *Developing Mathematical Ideas* (Schifter, Bastable, and Russell, 1999). These educators advocate encouraging children to do their own thinking and to invent their own procedures for solving problems rather than mimicking the algorithms of "carrying" and "borrowing."

Constructivism as a Theory about How Children Learn

For most scholars, constructivism is an epistemological and/or psychological theory explaining the nature of knowledge and how human beings acquire it. Epistemologists and psychologists' task is only to describe and explain knowledge, and the application of their theories to education is beyond the scope of their field. An example of a descriptive epistemological theory is radical constructivism.

Radical constructivism (von Glasersfeld, 1995) states, in essence, that human beings cannot know reality itself because all we can know is what we construct on the basis of our experience, which is limited. Radical constructivists believe that we will therefore never be able to attain truth and that we can attain only knowledge that is "viable." An idea is viable as long as it is useful in accomplishing a task or in achieving a goal. Instead of claiming that knowledge represents a world outside of our experience, radical constructivists thus say that knowledge is a tool that serves the purposes of adaptation. As a philosopher, von Glasersfeld wrote about the implications of radical constructivism for mathematics education, but his interest was mainly in describing and explaining the nature and limits of human knowledge.

The constructivist scholar whose work is best known to early childhood educators in the United States is Jean Piaget. Piaget was interested in describing and explaining the nature of human knowledge. His theory is different from philosophical theories in that it is a scientific theory based on sixty years of systematically collected evidence. He especially studied the centuries-old epistemological debates between empiricists and rationalists and concluded that both camps were correct in some ways and incorrect in other ways. As a scientist trained in biology, he decided that the only way to resolve the centuries-old debates between empiricism and rationalism was to study the origin and development of knowledge scientifically. His study of children was a means to answer such questions as "How do we know what we think we know?"; "How do human beings acquire logic?"; and "What is the nature of number?"

Piaget made a fundamental distinction among three kinds of knowledge according to their ultimate sources—physical knowledge, logico-mathematical

knowledge, and social-conventional knowledge (Piaget, 1967). Physical knowledge is knowledge of objects such as liquids, solids, and the noise a rattle makes when a baby shakes it. Examples of social-conventional knowledge are knowledge of languages and etiquette. As the ultimate source of physical knowledge is objects, and the ultimate source of social-conventional knowledge is conventions made by people, these two kinds of knowledge can be said to have sources outside the individual. By contrast, logico-mathematical knowledge consists of mental relationships each individual creates from within.

Our knowledge of number is an example of logico-mathematical knowledge as can be seen in the conservation-of-number task. When children have not constructed a certain level of logic from within, they say that a long line of eight counters has more than a short line of eight counters that they put out before with one-to-one correspondence. Children can see the counters (physical knowledge), but number is logico-mathematical knowledge, which is not empirically observable. When children have constructed a higher level of logic, however, they begin to deduce that the two rows have the same number “because you only moved them.”

The distinction among the three kinds of knowledge has far-reaching implications for curriculum for young children. For example, it informs us that learning to speak, read, and write belongs to social knowledge that requires input from people. This need for social transmission, however, does not mean that social knowledge does not have to be constructed from the inside. When babies begin to talk, they begin with one-word utterances like “ball!” and go on to two-word utterances like “ball gone.” In **kindergarten**, children speak in complete sentences but often say, “I thought it in my head.” These are examples of the constructive process from within.

The physical sciences are the logico-mathematization of physical knowledge. An example of a good science activity based on Piaget’s theory is **play** involving the domino effect. By varying the distance and angle between dominoes, children find out about how force can be transmitted from domino to domino under certain conditions. This is a much better science activity than exploration with a magnet, which is often recommended as a science activity. A magnet attracts certain metals but not others that look exactly the same, and many believe that young children cannot understand magnetism beyond these seemingly random behaviors.

The Importance of a Scientific Explanation of How Children Acquire Knowledge

For centuries, education has been based on opinions called “philosophies.” But education began to be influenced by science when it embraced associationism and behaviorism. **Behaviorism** essentially explains learning as a function of rewards and conditioning and is a scientific theory that has been confirmed all over the world.

Piaget’s constructivism is another scientific theory that has been evaluated, debated, and examined through cross-cultural research. While variations in the ages of children’s acquisition of key mental constructs have been found, the theoretical tenet that knowledge is constructed from within has never been disproved. There is little question but that constructivist theory has had a profound effect on the field of early childhood education. To date, however, educators endlessly argue

about the superiority of “this method of teaching” or “that method of teaching.” Continued research and applied investigations of constructivism as it explains children’s knowledge construction (e.g., Kamii, 2000) will enhance understandings of how human beings acquire knowledge. *See also* Curriculum, Science; Pedagogy.

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Constance Kamii and Yasubiko Kato

Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood

Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood (www.triangle.co.uk/ciec) is a fully refereed, international research journal that provides a forum for researchers and professionals who are exploring new and alternative perspectives in their work with young children (from birth to eight years of age) and their families. It aims to present opportunities for scholars to highlight the ways in which the boundaries of early childhood studies and practice are expanding, and for readers to participate in the discussion of emerging issues, contradictions, and possibilities.

Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood incorporates interdisciplinary, cutting edge work, which may include poststructuralist, postmodern, and postcolonial approaches; queer theory, sociology of childhood, alternative viewpoints of child development. The journal articles deal with issues such as language and identity, the discourse of difference, new information technologies, stories and voices, curriculum, culture and pedagogy, or any combination of such ideas.

The primary audience for *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* is early childhood students (graduate and undergraduate) and educators as well as those involved in associated family and community services. The multidisciplinary focus ensures that the journal is relevant to professionals from a wide variety of

interrelated disciplines that consider issues related to the lives of young children. For example, these may include social workers, allied health professionals, and policymakers as well as professionals who conduct research into the social contexts of education, literacy, and numeracy, the new information technologies, the sciences and the arts. Additionally, it has a broad appeal to teachers and researchers interested in specific aspects and applications of curriculum and social issues related to young children.

Susan Grieshaber and Nicola Yelland

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a legally binding, non-negotiable international document unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1989. The CRC was created to ensure every child the right to survival, development, protection, and participation by recognizing and protecting their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The CRC defines a child as any person below age 18, unless a younger majority age is recognized by national law (Article 1).

The CRC is the most rapidly and universally accepted international human rights treaty in history. It entered into force on September 2, 1990, and has been ratified by 192 countries. Only two countries—the United States and Somalia—have not ratified the CRC, with the latter nation unable to ratify because it currently has no recognized central government authority (UNICEF).

The CRC rests on the following four foundational principles:

1. Nondiscrimination (Article 2).
2. The best interests of the child (Article 3).
3. The child's right to life, survival, and development (Article 6).
4. Respect for the views of the child (Article 12) (BvLF, 2001).

The CRC was built on the consensus of a special working group formed by the United Nations in 1979. The group, representing countries with various traditions, cultural values, religious beliefs, and varied legal and economic systems, carried out an in-depth, 10-year review including preexisting declarations and covenants (UNICEF).

The Convention requires governments to view the child as an individual with rights and freedoms, including the right to a name and nationality at birth; participation in family, cultural, and social life; access to education, health care and nutrition; freedom of opinion, expression and association; and protection from abuse and exploitation (including children with handicaps, orphans, and refugees). The Convention obliges governments to inform children of their rights.

The CRC contains a preamble, fifty-four provisions, and two optional protocols. The preamble recalls the basic principles of the United Nations and specific human rights treaties and proclamations foundational to the CRC. Articles 1–41 detail the minimum rights of all children, without discrimination, including standards by which all governments must aspire to achieve them. Articles 42–54 outline the

implementation of the CRC and its entry into force, including the obligation of states to report to a body of independent elected experts every five years (Article 44) (OHCHR). The Optional Protocols were added to strengthen the provisions of the CRC in specific areas. The first protocol addresses the involvement of children in armed conflict; the protocol entered into force on February 12, 2002, and has been signed by 117 countries and ratified by eighty-eight. The second protocol addresses the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography; it entered into force on January 18, 2002. To date, 110 countries have signed and eighty-seven have ratified this protocol.

Equally authentic texts of the CRC are available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. *See also* United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

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Hollie Hix-Small

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior. Examples include slapping a child's hand or buttocks, squeezing a child's arm, and hitting the child on the buttocks with a belt or paddle. Until recently, in all nations except Sweden, parents and teachers were expected and sometimes required to use corporal punishment as a means of controlling and socializing children. In 1929, Sweden became the first to end corporal punishment in schools. Fifty years later, the law prohibiting corporal punishment was extended to parents. The Swedish no-spanking law did not include any criminal penalties. It was intended as a statement of national policy and to authorize funds for educational efforts to bring about the change. Since then, corporal punishment by parents has been banned in thirteen other countries. In June 2006, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a policy statement declaring that it is "the obligation of all States parties to move quickly to prohibit and eliminate all corporal punishment and all other cruel or degrading forms of punishment of children by parents, teachers, and other caregivers."

Prevalence and Chronicity of Corporal Punishment by Parents and Teachers

Corporal punishment of children has been the norm for thousands of years. According to Proverbs 13:24 "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that

loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” According to Deuteronomy 22:12, corporal punishment in childhood may avoid more serious consequences later. “This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard. Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death.” In eighteenth-century England, Susanna Wesley wrote to her son John, the founder of the Methodist Church, about how he and his siblings were brought up: “When they turned a year old . . . , they were taught to fear the rod and to cry softly. . . .”

Despite changing attitudes to corporal punishment, its use by parents continues to be prevalent. In modern America, a majority of parents believe that corporal punishment is sometimes necessary, and books that advise parents to spank, such as “To Spank or not to Spank” and “Dare to Discipline,” sell millions of copies. Recent research indicates that over a third of American parents hit infants, and over 90 percent hit toddlers, making this form of violent child rearing part of the socialization experience of almost all children, although the severity and frequency varies tremendously. Nevertheless, when corporal punishment is used as a parenting strategy, it is relatively frequent. For toddlers, several studies show an average of about three times a week. Corporal punishment is not limited to the infant-toddler period. To the contrary, children are typically hit by adults for many years. In the United States, corporal punishment continues until the early teens for about a third of children. Opponents of corporal punishment describe this as twelve years of violent socialization. A 2006 study of university students in nineteen nations found that 57 percent recalled frequent corporal punishment before age 12, but the rates varied widely from 13 percent (Leuven, Belgium) to 73 percent (Washington, DC, USA).

Research by Hyman found that corporal punishment by teachers was equally prevalent. In 1979, forty-six of the fifty American states, and almost all other countries, permitted teachers to hit children. Nine U.S states give teachers immunity from civil damages if a child is injured when they use corporal punishment. However, a provision giving such immunity in the federal **No Child Left Behind** legislation of 2001 was removed before passage despite strong pressure from the president.

Although the trend away from corporal punishment is strong and world-wide, it is controversial. The controversy occurs because, except for a small group of children’s rights activists, the majority of parents and the majority of child psychologists and parent educators, including those who think that corporal punishment should be avoided, are opposed to banning corporal punishment. This seeming contradiction occurs because they believe that punishment works when other methods do not, and therefore may sometimes be necessary. For example, a 2000 study of clinical child psychologists by Schencket al. (2000) found that although they were generally opposed to corporal punishment, two-thirds considered it ethical to advise corporal punishment under some circumstances. A 2006 study of university students in thirty-two countries by Straus found that only 26 percent of students in the median university strongly disagreed that “It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking.” Among American students, only 21 percent strongly disagreed. Only in Sweden did almost all university students (95%) reject the idea that corporal punishment is sometimes necessary. Many fundamentalist Christians believe they have a religious obligation to

follow the Old Testament injunctions to use the “rod” to correct misbehavior. On the other hand, many liberal Christians believe “rod” refers to the staff used by shepherds to guide the flock, not to an instrument for hitting.

Research on Effectiveness of Corporal Punishment in U.S. Settings

One of the reasons why corporal punishment continues to be a common practice in many families is a deeply ingrained belief that corporal punishment is more effective than other methods of discipline. Even people who are opposed to using corporal punishment tend to believe it is sometimes necessary when other methods have failed. However, this belief is not supported by any empirical study that compared corporal and noncorporal punishment. A study by Larzelere and Miranda (1994) is particularly important, not only because it clearly shows that corporal punishment is *not* more effective than nonviolent methods of discipline in preventing repetition of the misbehavior but because it also shows the power of commitment to the presumed necessity of sometimes spanking. Despite his own research results, Larzelere continues to support use of corporal punishment, perhaps because studies showing that corporal punishment is not more effective in preventing repetition of the misbehavior can also be interpreted as showing that corporal punishment is just as effective as other methods. Therefore, why not spank? Critics of corporal punishment point to studies, including seven that were longitudinal, which have found that, although in the short run corporal punishment produces compliance by the child, it is counterproductive in the long run, i.e., it is less effective, and has harmful side effects. For a few children, one spanking may end that misbehavior once and for all; just as for a few children one verbal admonition may end the problem once and for all. But on average, although corporal punishment often stops the misbehavior in the immediate situation, the effect in the subsequent weeks and months is to *increase* the subsequent level of misbehavior. In addition, research has found that corporal punishment is associated with subsequent increase in many behavior problems such as antisocial behavior and slower cognitive development; and later in life, with problems such as depression, violence against dating and marital partners, and conviction for committing a serious crime.

A turning point in understanding the effects of corporal punishment occurred in 1997 with the publication of the first longitudinal study that obtained data on *change* in the child’s behavior subsequent to spanking. This was a crucial development because none of the previous research on the link between spanking and child behavior problems demonstrated that corporal punishment might actually contribute to the behavior problems. In fact, the pre-1997 research can just as plausibly be interpreted as showing that child behavior problems cause parents to spank. Subsequent longitudinal studies show that, although misbehavior serves as direct incentive for some parents to spank, it is a counterproductive method of correcting misbehavior and is psychologically dangerous to the child. The benefit of the longitudinal studies is associated with the opportunity to examine change in the child’s misbehavior subsequent to spanking, allowing determination of whether the spanking was followed by a decrease in misbehavior (as per the cultural belief system) or an increase in misbehavior and behavior problems. Each of

these longitudinal studies had results that show spanking to be associated with an increase in antisocial behavior problems two years later.

It is important to acknowledge that the magnitude of the harmful effects of corporal punishment on an individual child is small compared to the effects of other kinds of violent victimization of children, such as physical and sexual abuse. However, the potential cumulative effect on the mental health of the population is significant, given that such a large percent of children experience corporal punishment and because of the high frequency during any one year and the repetition for many years.

These studies suggest three key conclusions: First, although corporal punishment usually “works,” it does not work any better than other methods of correction and control even in the immediate situation and, in subsequent months and years, it tends to be less effective. Second, corporal punishment has harmful side effects that other methods do not. Third, given these harmful side effects, standard medical practice requires advising parents to switch to a “medicine” that has the same effectiveness but not the harmful side effects; that is, to noncorporal modes of discipline. However, only a tiny percent of pediatricians and child psychologists follow this standard practice and advise parents to never spank. For example, a review of ten leading child psychology textbooks found none that recommended *never* spanking. Even *Dr. Spock’s Book of Baby and Child Care*, instead of advising parents to never spank, advises them to “avoid it if you can.” Ironically, that advice almost guarantees that parents will spank if their goal is to teach very young children to control their own behavior. Larzelere and Miranda’s study of two-year old children found that half repeated the misbehavior within two hours and 80 percent within the same day, and that this applied to all methods of correction. Thus, when parents follow the advice of “avoid it if you can” and the child repeats the misbehavior after noncorporal modes of correction, they are likely to conclude that they cannot avoid spanking. Thus, to end corporal punishment, the advice needs to be *never* spank.

Never-spanking is a message parents and professionals working with parents find difficult to accept because the belief that corporal punishment works when other methods do not is so firmly embedded in the culture of most societies. It is also hard to accept because it seems to be contradicted by the day-to-day experience of parents who have told a child “no,” reasoned or explained, or used time-out, only to have the child repeat the misbehavior. Parents and professionals advising parents do not point out to parents that this happens just as often when toddlers are spanked, and they also do not tell parents to never spank, as they would tell them to never let a child smoke.

An important difference between spanking and other modes of correction is that parents who spank are prepared to do it again and again until the child ceases the misbehavior. But when parents use noncorporal discipline and the child repeats the misbehavior, they are likely to fall back on corporal punishment—the method their culture incorrectly tells them works when other methods have failed. Parents who spank and repeat the spanking as needed are using the right strategy, but with the wrong method. If they were as persistent with noncorporal methods, they would be even more effective, and not put the child at risk of the harmful side effects.

Trends

Aside from legislative changes, there is data on trends for only a few countries, but in every case it reveals substantial decreases in corporal punishment by parents. Perhaps the most dramatic example is Sweden. A study of all children born in a district of Stockholm in 1955 found that at age three, 94 percent of the parents were still using corporal punishment, and a third of them did it “at least daily.” By 1994, the percent of parents who spank had dropped to 31 percent. The most complete data is for the United States, although it conveys a more mixed picture. About two thirds of a national sample of parents of thirteen-year-old children reported using corporal punishment in 1975. By 1995 that percentage had decreased to a third, suggesting changing attitudes and practices for older children and adolescents. However, for toddlers, there was no decrease from the over 90% of parents who spanked in 1975, suggesting a continued belief in the efficacy of physical means of socializing the very young child.

Perhaps the most important explanation for the decreasing use of corporal punishment is an acceleration of a centuries-long trend toward a less violent society. Violence, even for socially desirable ends, is becoming less and less acceptable. Sanctioned corporal punishment of wives and of members of the armed services ended in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The death penalty has ended in all countries of the European Union and in many other nations as well. Interwoven with the decrease in interpersonal violence is an expansion in the scope of human rights, as manifested in the end of slavery, voting rights for women, the right to a free public education, and the United Nations charter on human rights. In 1990, the United Nations adopted a **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which prohibits inhumane treatment of children. As noted previously, the committee implementing the Convention has defined corporal punishment as inhumane and has called on all signatory nations to make it illegal. To date, the Convention has been signed by all nations except Somalia and the United States. These provisions of the Convention and other legal changes are part of what Norbert Elias calls a centuries-long “civilizing process.” Ending corporal punishment is one manifestation of that process.

Credit goes to Sweden for initiating this process in the 1920s and prohibiting corporal punishment by teachers, long before empirical evidence of harmful side effects became available. The end of corporal punishment in Swedish schools and the decrease in corporal punishment by Swedish parents thus reflects a change in moral standards more than a response to scientific evidence. Since the 1979 Swedish law, thirteen other countries have also banned spanking by parents. However, the educational effort to implement these laws has varied. Again, Sweden has done the most. For example, after the Swedish parenting law, all milk cartons carried the nonspanking message. A year later, over 90 percent of parents and children knew about it. In Germany, there was also a large educational effort after the legal change in 2000, but it was not specifically directed to children, and a year after the law, only about 30 percent of parents knew about it. Given the recency of most of the legislative changes and the variation in educational effort, the long term effects of prohibiting corporal punishment at this point are best evaluated for Sweden. The Swedish data show that, contrary to warnings

that Sweden would become a country with children out of control, the opposite has happened. There have been substantial *decreases* in crime, drug use, and suicide by Swedish children and youth. There are many possible reasons for these decreases and they cannot be attributed to the ending corporal punishment. However, it can be concluded that the fear of uncontrollable children if corporal punishment ended has not been borne out by the change in Sweden to a less violent and more humane mode of child rearing.

Over the past several decades, there has been a world-wide movement to end corporal punishment in schools, and more recently in the home. In the United States, about half the states now prohibit corporal punishment by teachers, and most of the large cities in the remaining half have prohibited corporal punishment even though state legislation or rules permit it. Child psychologists and pediatricians discourage corporal punishment. However, only a small minority explicitly advises parents to never spank, but that group is growing. Early childhood professional organizations such as the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) also have a specific stance against any form of corporal punishment for young children. Globally, child advocates continue to seek means to ban corporal punishment of children. In addition to the United Nations charter on children's rights, the European Union now requires member nations to end corporal punishment of children. Many child advocates look forward to an end to what some describe as a common and necessary socialization practice and others perceive as unnecessary and the "primordial violence against children."

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Murray A. Straus

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is a professional association dedicated to improving the educational success of children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. Its nearly 50,000 members include special education teachers and administrators, professors, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and parents. CEC focuses on improving the quality of special and general education. To achieve this goal, the Council works with state and local education districts,

the federal government, and other education organizations to find ways to better identify, teach, and care for children with exceptionalities.

In addition to encouraging the professional growth of its members and other special educators, CEC aids in recruiting personnel and promoting high professional standards. It encourages research in the education of children with exceptionalities and assists in the dissemination of research findings. And it engages in lobbying efforts at all levels of government to promote legislation that supports the education of children with special needs.

Disseminating information about the education of children with exceptionalities is one of CEC's major activities. CEC provides information to members and others who work with children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents through conventions, conferences, the CEC Web site, and publications. The Council publishes two professional journals, *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, a professional, practical-based journal, and *Exceptional Children*, a research journal. CEC also publishes *CEC Today*, the organization's newsletter, which covers current trends in special education and CEC activities. In addition, CEC publishes books and videos on special education and instructional strategies, research monographs, reviews of research, and special bulletins.

Another significant aspect of the Council's activities is developing standards for the field. To date, CEC has developed standards for what special education teachers, diagnosticians, administrators, and paraeducators must know to provide effective instruction and service. An important aspect of CEC's standards activities is providing recognition for outstanding special educators, which it accomplishes through its professional awards program.

CEC also engages in extensive **advocacy** activities. The Council cooperates with other education organizations to promote legislation that supports education in general, and special and gifted education in particular. CEC focuses its legislative efforts on ensuring that children with special needs receive a high-quality education and that special and gifted education programs are adequately funded. The Council further works to inform legislators at all levels, as well as the general public of the benefits society receives when children with exceptionalities reach their educational potential.

CEC consists of local, state/provincial, and regional affiliations. CEC's affiliates address state or provincial issues, hold conferences, publish newsletters, and coordinate the activities of the local chapters. The local chapters hold meetings, engage in projects to advance the education of children with exceptionalities, and publish newsletters.

CEC also has seventeen divisions, each of which specializes in a particular area of special education, including a **Division for Early Childhood** (DEC). Other divisions specialize in such areas as **learning disabilities**, mental retardation, and gifted education. Each division holds conferences on its particular area of special education, and produces a journal, Web site, and newsletter. The divisions also provide networking opportunities and support for their members.

CEC's national headquarters are located at 1110 N. Glebe Road, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22201. Its phone number is 888-232-7733 and Web site is www.cec.sped.org.

CP. See Cerebral Palsy

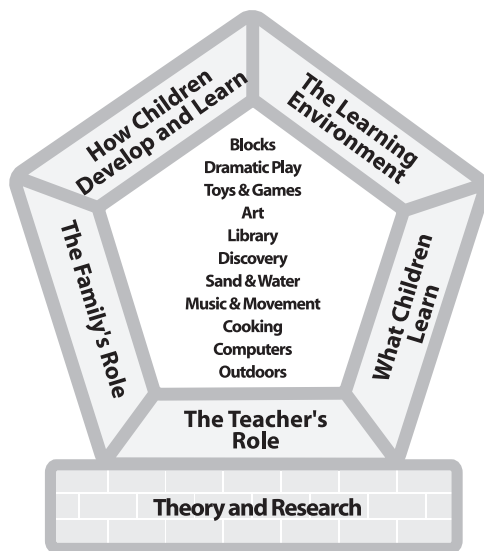
CRC. See Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is a comprehensive curriculum that defines for teachers what content to teach, why the designated content and skills are appropriate for young children, and how to teach effectively.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool is based on six fundamental beliefs:

1. The value of play as a vehicle for learning.
2. The importance of helping children to develop social competence.
3. The vital role of the teacher in connecting content and learning.
4. The benefits of building a partnership with families.
5. A belief that all children, including those with special needs, can thrive in an appropriate classroom.
6. The importance of linking curriculum and assessment.



Part 1: The Curriculum Framework

There are five components of the *Creative Curriculum* framework.

How children develop and learn. A preschool child's social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development, and his or her characteristics and experiences, make each child unique. Goals and objectives for children are linked to the *Developmental Continuum*, a tool for observing children's development and tracking their progress in relation to Curriculum objectives.

The learning environment. The structure of the classroom that makes it possible for teachers to teach and children to learn. This includes how teachers set up and maintain interest areas in the classroom, establish schedules and routines, organize choice times and small- and large-group times, and create a classroom community where children learn how to get along with others and solve problems peacefully.

What children learn. The body of knowledge included in national and state standards for six content areas—literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology—and the process skills children use to learn that content. The Creative Curriculum shows how children learn content and skills through daily experiences.

The teacher's role. How careful observations of children lead to a variety of instructional strategies to guide children's learning. The Creative Curriculum explains how teachers interact with children in interest areas and during in-depth studies. It describes a systematic approach to **assessment** that enables teachers to learn about and plan for each child and the group.

The family's role. The benefits of developing a partnership with every family and working together to support children's optimal development and learning. This last component includes getting to know families, welcoming them and communicating with them regularly, partnering on children's learning, and responding to challenging situations.

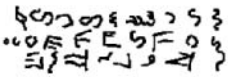
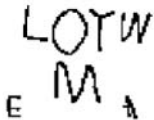
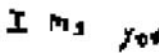
Part 2: Interest Areas

The five components of *The Creative Curriculum* framework are applied to eleven areas—blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, computers, and outdoors. The Creative Curriculum describes the materials that meet the developmental needs of young children and enhance learning and teaching. Each interest area description shows the connections between *The Creative Curriculum's* fifty objectives and academic content and how teachers guide and assess children's learning. Each description ends with a letter to families on ways to support children's learning at school and at home.

Throughout the Creative Curriculum there are examples of how two teachers, Ms. Tory and Mr. Alvarez, work with a group of eighteen preschool children.

A key element of *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is the strong link between curriculum and assessment. *The Creative Curriculum* goals and objectives provide the direction for planning the program and a framework for determining what each child knows and how each child is developing.

Each of the fifty objectives is mapped on a continuum of development so that teachers can evaluate and analyze a child's progress and offer strategies and activities to help that child progress to the next level. The following diagram shows an example of one objective of *The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5*. The nonshaded boxes illustrate typical development of children ages 3-5 on Objective 50, writes letters and words. The shaded box labeled *forerunners* includes examples of emerging skills for children who are not in the typical range of development and lag behind because of lack of experience or a diagnosed disability.

<p>50.</p> <p>Writes letters and words</p>	<p>Forerunners</p> <p>Scribbles with crayons</p> <p>Experiments with writing tools such as markers and pencils</p> <p>Draws simple pictures to represent something</p>	<p>Uses scribble writing and letter-like forms</p> 	<p>Writes recognizable letters, especially those in own name</p> 	<p>Uses letters that represent sounds in writing words</p> 
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Teachers observe children during their everyday classroom experiences, document what they see and hear, and then make informed decisions regarding a child's development using the *Developmental Continuum*. They use this information to plan activities and experiences tailored to the individual child.

This observation-based, authentic, ongoing assessment system is based on a valid and reliable instrument, *The Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5*. There are two versions of this system:

- *The Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit for Ages 3-5*, the paper version. It includes all the materials and forms needed for a class of twenty-five children, including report forms for parents to be used three times a year.
- *CreativeCurriculum.net*, the online subscription system. Online, teachers enter observational notes and upload photos, scanned images, audio files, and video clips. Each observation is then linked to *The Creative Curriculum* objectives. Teachers refer to these when analyzing and evaluating children's progress on the *Developmental Continuum*. There are more than 500 activities for both home and school, each linked specifically to a developmental step on the Continuum.

The Creative Curriculum® is the title of a series of curriculum and assessment materials that include the following:

- *The Creative Curriculum*® for Infants & Toddlers
- *The Creative Curriculum*® for Preschool
- *The Creative Curriculum*® Developmental Continuum Assessment System
- *The Creative Curriculum*® for Family Child Care
See also Families.

Diane Trister Dodge

Creativity

Among early childhood educators, belief in the inherent creativity of young children is long standing and pervasive. In the field of creativity studies, however, the subject becomes more complicated. Among creativity scholars, numerous definitions exist that describe the creative person, the creative process, or how a variety of factors interact over time in a particular context to produce a creative product. Studies of extreme cases of creativity may highlight unusual gifts or atypical, sometimes psychotic, behavior. There are also definitions that credit esoteric forces, such as divine power or spirituality, with the occurrence of great creativity. Some even believe that creativity should not be defined—that it is unknown and unknowable.

Two of the most influential theories of development—those of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky—provide support for the view that children are creative in certain respects. But, as this discussion will show, they also assert that creative contributions of enduring value are only achieved after childhood and early adolescence.

There are many questions about creativity that are of interest to the early childhood educator. Among them are these: How does childhood fit into the puzzle of creativity? Are all young children creative, as is commonly believed, or is creativity a quality of the select few? What roles should teachers and parents play, if any, in enhancing creativity? Does it make sense to try to identify creative children and develop their talent, or is the relationship between childhood influences and adult creativity negligible or nonexistent? Although definitive answers to

these questions are likely well into the future, the field of creativity studies has contributed to our understanding and, more important for the present purpose, to the relationship between creativity and early childhood education.

This discussion will first trace the belief that all children are creative back to its likely source—the influence of developmental theory on early childhood education over the past century. Next, the discussion will turn to contemporary creativity studies, including an examination of how influential theorists and scholars see the relationship between childhood and adult creativity. The reader will learn that recent definitions of creativity lean away from describing the traits of creative people (children or adults) and toward analyzing the multidimensional aspects of creativity.

Essentially, creativity will be shown to rely on a variety of qualities, skills, and capacities, some of which are partially developed during early childhood. The discussion will also show that a fundamental distinction must be made between those qualities of creative thought that are universal and common to all children, as contrasted with those qualities that vary from child to child. Moreover, context and timing is critical in determining who or what will ultimately be judged creative. The essay will conclude by pointing out that early childhood education serves a vital role in providing optimal conditions for sustaining creativity, a role that may be somewhat different from the one traditionally held.

The Influence of Developmental Theory on Definitions of Childhood Creativity

At least since the **child study movement** of the late 1800s, **progressive** American educators, such as kindergarteners **Patty Smith Hill** and **Alice Temple**, have recognized and celebrated young children's imaginative and expressive tendencies. **Rachel and Margaret McMillan**, famous for founding the nursery school movement in London in 1911, also placed a high value on children's imagination, **play**, and "creativity."

In more recent decades, prominent early childhood educators in America and abroad have carried on the traditions of the child study movement by applying the developmental theories of **Arnold Gesell**, **Sigmund Freud**, **Erik Erikson**, **Jean Piaget**, and, most recently, **Lev Vygotsky**. Each of these theorists granted children's creativity a prominent place, although interpretations varied according to each theory. Early childhood educators, in turn, have interpreted theory and research in relation to their existing goals, beliefs, and practices.

Gesell's normative age/stage theory identified a timetable for the emergence of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics, including manifestations of creativity, such as fantasy and representational play. **Freud's** psychosexual theory linked early childhood to creativity by emphasizing that children's thought processes are not subject to rules of logic, an important feature of adult creativity, and by establishing a link between cognition and strong emotion, a driving force behind creativity. By stressing the importance of symbolic and fantasy play, during which time children take leave of reality, psychoanalytically oriented theories showed how some of the natural tendencies of young children might play themselves out in adult creativity.

The constructivist theories of **Piaget** and **Vygotsky** influence early childhood education today and are often cited in descriptions of **developmentally appropriate**

practice. Piaget's theory of **cognitive development** emphasizes individual constructions of knowledge, while Vygotsky's **sociocultural theory** places more emphasis on social and instructional contributions to development. Both theories, however, emphasize the importance of play (albeit different kinds of play) for promoting cognitive development and preparing for adult creativity.

For Piaget, the emergence of symbolic thought at around age two brings with it an explosion of language and the beginnings of pretend, symbolic play—the quintessence of creative activity during early childhood. As well, Piaget's description of equilibration, the process that drives cognitive development, includes characteristics that associate readily with prevailing definitions of creativity during early childhood—qualities such as curiosity, exploration, and invention.

A more subtle description of Piaget's ideas about creativity involves assimilation, which, along with accommodation, are the two basic processes involved in the equilibration process, that is, the construction of knowledge. Piaget viewed assimilation as relatively more effortless than accommodation in its functioning. For example, Piaget said that symbolic play was the purest form of assimilation—in symbolic play, children make of the world whatever they wish with little regard for reality. In contrast, Piaget called imitation the most obvious form of accommodation, a process that is more cumulative and that builds up knowledge over time.

For Piaget, adult creativity depends on keeping intact the child's powerful tendency to assimilate new experiences to serve her or his own purposes. However, the tendency to assimilate is necessary but not sufficient for creative contributions. Only when the person has acquired a rich and accurate understanding of the known world will she or he be able to transform it productively. Piaget (1972) recognized that some individuals are more talented at doing creative work than others, but why this is so, he acknowledged, is “wrapped in mystery. . .” (Piaget, 1972, p. 221).

Vygotsky also believed that play facilitated creativity, but his focus was on play as it helped children learn what is true in their social world through creation of “imaginary situations” (Vygotsky, 1978). In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky emphasized the kind of play that facilitates accommodation (although he did not use Piaget's terminology). Through play, Vygotsky maintained, children create their own “zone of proximal development,” the most famous of Vygotsky's ideas. The zone of proximal development is the distance between what children can do independently and what they can do with the assistance of more capable others, such as playmates, parents, and teachers. In play, Vygotsky believed, children are always reaching ahead of themselves.

So it is that the influence of at least a century's worth of child development theory, intertwined with a Western **culture** that tends to romanticize children and childhood, has by now produced an orthodoxy on the question of childhood creativity. The conviction that all young children are creative permeates the early childhood literature. None of these developmental theories, however, deals with specific talents and gifts that may portend exceptional development. Their focus is on various aspects of early thought and emotion and the role that these have in achieving normal development. This role is crucial, but it leaves open the question of how to identify and support exceptional promise.

As well, the field has not undertaken systematic empirical work to support the claim that all children are creative, nor has it yet assimilated the subtleties of psychology's most powerful developmental theories. Creativity in the received developmental point of view of early childhood education emphasizes the child's playful, imaginative, spontaneous, expressive, and inventive capabilities, just as one might expect based on the theories briefly reviewed here.

The Field of Creativity Studies

In 1950, J. P. Guilford, outgoing President of the American Psychological Association, launched the field of creativity studies with a daring challenge to psychologists—to broaden their research on **intelligence** to include creativity. Up to that point, psychologists had focused their study of talented adults on **IQ**, an approach that, in Guilford's view, limited scholarship on a topic of critical national importance (Guilford, 1950). Guilford saw creativity as a trait shared to greater or lesser degrees by all individuals and believed that a psychometric test could be constructed that would provide an accurate measure of a person's creative capacity. Guilford's work was with adults, but other scholars, inspired by Guilford's vision, tried to extend creativity testing into the early childhood years. After two decades of research, consensus within the field of creativity studies concluded that the effort to produce valid and reliable psychometric instruments for the assessment of creative potential was on the whole unsuccessful.

Starting in the mid-1970s, the field of creativity studies moved away from testing and toward the study of cognitive, emotional, personal, and cultural aspects of creativity, primarily in adults. The field also embraced the case study method, with several important studies of exceptionally creative individuals (e.g., Darwin, Gandhi, Madame Curie). These studies revealed valuable information about the childhoods of the cases. For example, Darwin was slow to develop as a student and would not have been identified as unusually creative in early childhood. On the other hand, his passion for insects could have been spotted by an astute early childhood educator. This finding suggests that today's teachers might help identify and develop children's specific interests rather than trying to enhance general development. A growing consensus in the field of creativity studies suggests that creativity is domain specific.

Robert Sternberg's (1999, pp. 4-12) *Handbook of Creativity* summarizes the major contemporary perspectives on creativity, none of which is specifically aimed at early childhood. Mystical views of creativity, dating back at least to Plato, credit divine intervention with creative production; although not widespread, mystical views of creativity persist. Indeed, Piaget (1972), quoted earlier, expressed such a view when it comes to individual talent or genius.

In direct contrast, pragmatic approaches, which seem to have a good deal of popular and commercial appeal, attempt to stimulate innovative thinking of the sort identified by Guilford by using training exercises. Psychodynamic approaches, associated most closely with Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory, attribute creativity to unconscious drives and rely primarily on case studies of eminent creators; relatively few studies with an explicitly psychodynamic perspective currently appear in the literature.

Psychometric approaches dominated the creativity field from 1950–1970. This approach relied on paper and pencil assessments that tested divergent thinking, cognitive fluency, flexibility, and the originality of a subject's responses. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1974), for example, were widely used to identify individuals, including children, who were "creative." The tests did not reliably predict a relationship between high scores and real life creativity, however, weakening claims that the tests measured creative potential.

The cognitive approach to the study of creativity uses both human subjects and computer simulations in an attempt to identify the mental representations and processes underlying creative thought. A fundamental belief of this point of view is that creativity can be reduced to ordinary cognitive processes that can in turn be programmed into computers or taught to people.

Personality analyses of creativity have appeared in the literature for decades, with researchers noting time and again that certain personality characteristics tend to describe creative people. These characteristics include independence of judgment, self-confidence, attraction to complexity, aesthetic orientation, and risk-taking. Motivational traits, such as boldness, courage, ambition, and perseverance, also characterize creative people.

The relevance of the social context and of historical events to creativity has also become an active area of research, particularly as the field shifted away from the study of creative persons and toward the creation of more complex models. Simonton (1994), for example, studied creativity over broad spans of time and in diverse cultures to show the impact of society on creative performance. His work considered how variables such as cultural diversity, war, role models, financial support, and the number of competitors in a domain determine who will ultimately achieve creative eminence.

Each of the six approaches discussed in Sternberg's (1999) review (mystical, pragmatic, psychoanalytic, psychometric, cognitive, and personal-social) has contributed to our understanding of creativity, but none offers a completely satisfying solution to the questions that early childhood educators ask about creativity. The field of creativity studies has now moved toward more integrative, multidisciplinary, systemic views of creativity, emphasizing that creative development is more domain-specific than had been previously believed. While still in their formative stages, several of these new approaches offer helpful ideas about the role of teachers and schools in fostering creative development.

Systems Approaches to the Study of Creativity

Systems approaches to the study of creativity maintain that multiple factors must converge for enduring creativity to occur. Howard Gruber's study of Charles Darwin's thought as he constructed his theory of evolution through random variation and natural selection helped launch the evolving-systems point of view about creativity. Gruber's study of Darwin shows that creative contributions of the highest order require sustained effort over long periods of time (at least ten years), coordination of many strands of activity, extensive experience and preparation in the subject matter field, and a powerful vision that guides the work.

Working along similar lines, David Henry Feldman proposed a model of creativity where a “coincidence” of dimensions is involved in instances of creative genius. Feldman’s work also revealed that children, even child prodigies, rarely make contributions that can be considered enduringly creative. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s systems approach highlights the interaction among the individual, the field, and the domain, and emphasizes that creativity is as much a judgment by society as it is an individual achievement. Howard Gardner, best known for his **multiple intelligences** theory, also works within a systems tradition, focusing his attention on analyzing the lives of indisputably creative individuals. *Changing the World: A Framework for the Study of Creativity* collects the work of these scholars into one volume (Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi, and Gardner, 1994).

Creativity and Young Children

This entry began by raising several questions about creativity and young children. As we have seen, the scholarly field of creativity studies is vital and diverse, but has for the most part not addressed directly the questions of greatest interest to the early childhood community. At the outset, we asked whether all young children are creative, as is commonly believed. Our review has shown that, while all typically developing children display characteristics associated with creativity, such as curiosity, expressiveness, playfulness, attentiveness to the world, generativity, inventiveness, imagination, and spontaneity, these qualities of the early childhood years are quite likely aspects of natural *development* and will not necessarily lead to adult creativity. Childhood creativity is not the creativity of the master, but some of its qualities must be preserved if masterworks are to be achieved. Feldman (2003) alerts us to one of the most challenging questions in the field of both creativity studies and early childhood education: How can we sustain the childlike spark that ignites the creative process through the many challenges to its expression and in a form that can be appreciated by others?

Perhaps the definition of early childhood creativity should be expanded beyond the usual platitudes to include the idea that children should use their exploratory and inventive tendencies *to change the world around them*—to take liberties with reality and to transform natural or artificial materials in an infinite variety of ways. The field of early childhood education has traditionally led the way in providing young children with open-ended materials that invite imaginative use and endless variations on the play themes of childhood, and this effort seems all to the good so far as creativity is concerned. The field should perhaps be as concerned about helping identify remarkable creative potential in children in specific content areas as in sustaining and supporting the natural creative tendencies of all children.

The preschools of **Reggio Emilia**, Italy provide a model that deserves mention in any discussion of childhood creativity (Edwards, Gandini, and Forman, 1995). Loris **Malaguzzi** was adamant that all humans have creative potentials and that schools must nurture this as well as other developing capacities. Lessons from Reggio Emilia suggest strongly that young children need ample time, adequate space, inviting materials, a supportive climate, and, perhaps most important, provocative experiences with challenging subject matter that arouse and sustain

their creative impulses. Whether or not these ingredients lead to creative accomplishments in adulthood should not be the main concern, for surely they will lead to healthy development. This may in turn lead to an increase in the number of children who grow up to lead creative lives and enrich their culture through enduring creative achievements. *See also* Constructivism.

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Ann C. Benjamin and David Henry Feldman

Culture

Culture is an important construct in **early childhood education and care programs** because these are often the first institutional settings in which young children spend time away from their families. Early childhood programs are intergenerational meeting grounds of diversity in which teachers, children, caregivers, and families from different cultural and language backgrounds come together. All of these individuals (including young children) act as cultural agents who bring ways of knowing and being that reflect their culture's traditions and practices. In these settings cultural differences often involve fundamental aspects of meaning, interpersonal communication, norms, assumptions, roles, and models of competence. For example, constructs such as **disability**, **health**, mental health, learning, teaching, **race**, adult roles, and child development all are grounded in particular cultural beliefs. The capacity of early childhood educators or programs to respond effectively to children and families may be hampered by misunderstanding of unexamined cultural values, behaviors, and meanings. Teachers' and caregivers' professional socialization to the culture of early childhood may also influence their interaction with children and **families** from different cultural backgrounds. Further, care and education in early childhood programs may involve practices such as feeding, toileting, sleeping, literacy, and discipline that convey cultural values and beliefs about child competency, identity, and development. In addition, teacher competence in working with children from different cultural and language traditions is thought to be a significant factor in children's educational achievement and development. Research (Knapp et al., 1995) suggests that teachers who use their knowledge of a child's culture and language (e.g., communicate

in the child's language regarding educational content; engage children in culturally sensitive ways) are more effective educators than teachers who do not as measured by children's language and mathematics achievement.

Culture includes both *meaning systems* (such as values, beliefs, morality, myths, language) and *activity* (such as customs, practices, roles, rituals) shared by a group. Culture involves dynamic processes that give ordinary and extraordinary human experiences meaning, and is central in all human interaction. It is a complex web of relationships that include changing patterns, social formations, and institutions that adapt to collective experience, individual idiosyncrasies, and ecological conditions. Culture may include constructs and categories that reflect social stratification such as **race**, clan, social class, **disability**, **gender**, and **ethnicity**. Culture shapes individual and group interactions with the world and between children, families, and institutions. The effect of culture on children is not unidirectional—through their activity and engagement they redefine and reconstruct their culture. As they grow and develop, children are a significant source of cultural change. Culture is not a monolith and all members of a culture do not express or adhere to all core values, norms, and behaviors all of the time, or to the same extent. For example, African Americans are often defined as having one culture despite research evidence that cultural discontinuities exist among them (e.g., Anderson, 1999). In addition, children may belong to more than one culture—for example, the culture of their traditional family and community, the culture of school, and the culture of a playgroup—each of which has its own norms, values, and beliefs. In early childhood settings, culture may be expressed through parental goals, expectations, role prescriptions, spiritual beliefs, models of child competence, as well as behavioral expectations, norms, and scripts that define everyday practices (e.g., sleep routines, toileting). In addition, culture involves the public and private settings in which young children are reared, socialized, and educated—schools, child-care programs, playgroups, religious classes, backyards, streets, and living rooms. It is in these everyday settings that young children learn through participation, observation, and conversation with adults and peers the meanings, behaviors, roles, language, communicative behaviors, and prohibitions necessary for cultural fluency.

Defining culture has challenged social scientists and educators. Different definitions reflect differing models of human competence and theories of development. Understanding and interpreting cultural variation in child development, child rearing, parenting, and family functioning across groups has been influenced by the culture (e.g., values, worldview) of interpreters. Western social science has often described culture in terms of dichotomies (e.g., Western versus non-Western, individual versus collective/communal, high versus low, advanced versus primitive) that have reflected American and European developmental theories and ideologies. Research grounded in ethnocentric developmental theories on “culturally diverse” children (e.g., African American, Mexican immigrant, Zuni) that concludes they are “disadvantaged,” “deficient,” “deviant,” or “at-risk” has been criticized for theoretical and methodological biases (Váldes, 1996). Despite these identified biases, a substantial body of anthropological research has documented distinct rich cultural traditions that exist among racial and ethnic groups within

the United States, for example African American (Haight, 2002), Hawaiian, and Navajo (Tharp, 1994).

Historical trends in the evolution of Western social science have influenced the degree to which culture has been considered a central factor in child development. For example, in the mid-twentieth century **Jean Piaget**'s seminal theory and research essentially ignored culture and cast the child as the solo agent of her/his development; whereas in latter decades perspectives of child development, influenced largely by the theory of **Lev Vygotsky**, began to stress the importance of the child's active engagement in practices with informed cultural guides (e.g., adults, peers) (see Rogoff, 2003; Shorr, 1996). In addition, psychological research has too frequently attempted to reduce culture to a single "variable" or "factor" which ignores its essential role as processes inherent in human activity. These limitations have contributed to a general lack of understanding of how child development varies in the many cultures that are represented in modern societies, including the United States.

Interdisciplinary research involving anthropology, psychology, sociolinguistics, sociology, education, history, among other disciplines, has helped explain how culture influences child development. Significant early research (e.g., Margaret Mead, **Beatrice and John Whiting**) helped to establish the importance of understanding development in context, the role of participation in cultural activities as key to child socialization, and parenting as a cultural practice. Researchers influenced by this work contribute to our understanding of age-old questions regarding what is universal and what is particular to a given context, group, and individual. Robert LeVine's influential hierarchy of universal parental goals and his research on child-caregiver interaction among the Gusii of Kenya have richly illustrated models of parenting, child rearing, and child competence that challenge assumptions about optimal child development avowed by Western social science. For example, LeVine et al. (1994) report that Gusii mothers, in contrast to middle-class White American **mothers**, engage in less verbal interaction with young children, keep young children physically close, and carefully monitor expressions of infant distress and discomfort (e.g., infants sleep with their mothers, are carried by mothers, cry very little). In addition, young Gusii children do not commonly play with a variety of commercial toys. Yet despite early developmental experiences that are, by Western middle-class standards, less rich in mother-child language interactions and **play** with objects, activities thought to be associated with educational achievement, Gusii children's educational attainment is age appropriate. Similarly, the work of other researchers (e.g., Kağitçibaşı, 1996) suggests that cultures offer children a variety of successful developmental pathways to child and adult competence.

In early education research and policy, culture has often been used as a proxy for social class and race. Since the 1960s early childhood educators and researchers have attributed observed differences in child outcomes (e.g., school **readiness**, educational attainment) to presumed cultural differences between social elites and socially and educationally marginalized groups (e.g., the poor, African Americans). Terms such as *cultural disadvantage* and *culture of poverty* have been employed to explain why poor children and children of color may need remedial programs (e.g., **Head Start**). In addition, **school culture**, especially when it does

not correspond to or show a goodness of fit with “home culture” (that is, the culture of their families and communities), is seen as a factor in the educational failure of some children.

In early childhood programs cultural diversity, including **second language acquisition**, has become a significant issue in **curriculum** development, instructional practices, and professional preparation of early childhood teachers and staff. Programs and practitioners are expected to provide services to culturally and linguistically diverse children and families, and to address perceived inequities that are a reflection of social stratification (e.g., race, social class) and poorer educational outcomes for children of marginalized groups. **Anti-bias, multicultural education** and programs designed for second language learners (e.g., **bilingual education**) have been educational responses intended to address issues of culture, equity, and social justice. Early childhood practitioner development, especially teacher preparation, has been a significant focus of the field. In part this is due to two factors: a recognition that teachers—their training, dispositions, subject knowledge, ability to understand the children, families and communities—are the most important factor in the educational enterprise (Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, 2001); and changing demographics in early childhood programs. It is estimated that, if current demographic trends continue, by the year 2020 the population of children under 18 years of age will be 48 percent non-white and Spanish-speaking, and by mid-century a majority of Americans will live in ethnically diverse families (McAdoo, 1993). Despite these realities, the majority of teachers (78–97%) remain, and will be for the foreseeable future, predominately White, monolingual, and middle-class (Saluja, Early, and Clifford, 2002). Research (Ray, Bowman, and Robbins, 2006) shows that early childhood teacher preparation programs do little to adequately prepare teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. In a study of 226 undergraduate programs Ray et al. found that less than 13 percent of professional course requirements addressed any aspects of child diversity, including culture, language, and special needs. In addition, poorly defined and little researched concepts such as *cultural competence* have emerged in practice literature. Generally, cultural competence refers to the presumed capacity of early childhood practitioners to engage and work effectively with children and families from different cultures. Often lacking in this practice literature are descriptions of the processes by which early childhood professionals gain the skills and knowledge necessary for effective work in settings that are increasingly multicultural and multilingual, including assessment strategies for gauging cultural competence and remediation for perceived deficiencies in teacher practice with children and families from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

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Aisha Ray and Barbara Bowman

Curriculum

The subject of “curriculum” has produced controversy in all fields of education, but perhaps nowhere more than in early childhood education. The following discussion provides an overview of definitions and sources of curriculum; dimensions on which curriculum may differ; curriculum mandates and implementation; curriculum comparison research; and continuing issues. This discussion creates a context in which to consider more specific curriculum models or approaches.

Definitions of Curriculum

The very definition of curriculum has been controversial. Curriculum is often described as a course of study with a defined scope and sequence; at the other extreme, curriculum has been viewed as everything that happens in the classroom—a perspective more commonly held in early childhood than in elementary and secondary education. A simple definition is that curriculum includes what children should know and how they should be taught. In its early childhood program standards, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** describes curriculum as including goals for the knowledge and skills to be acquired by children and the plans for learning experiences through which such knowledge and skills will be achieved.

Because of these definitional issues, there is also disagreement about which models or approaches should be defined as “curricula.” For example, some have referred to NAEYC’s construct of **developmentally appropriate practice** as a curriculum. However, NAEYC is careful to note that DAP is *not* a curriculum; rather, it consists of a set of guidelines for teaching practices, which could be implemented with many different curriculum models or approaches. Likewise, some

have cited **Reggio Emilia** as an example of a curriculum model. The Italian educators, however, emphasize that their approach to early childhood education is not a model—a term that suggests a structured approach to implementation. In fact, they resist defining the approach in this way because it tends to reify what they view as a dynamic, philosophical framework for working with young children and families. Until recently, few would have defined what happens in an infant/toddler program as “curriculum,” but today such curricula, often drawing on research supporting the centrality of early relationships, have become widely available and adopted.

Curriculum is also related to, but conceptually distinct from, **pedagogy**, which is generally thought of as the repertoire of methods used by teachers, influenced by their overall philosophy and knowledge base. In other words, curriculum is more the “what” of teaching while pedagogy represents the integration of curriculum content with the “how” and the “why.”

Sources of Curriculum

Historically, early childhood curriculum has been derived from child development theory and research; for example, the **High/Scope** curriculum was developed from Jean **Piaget**’s theory of **cognitive development**. However, like pedagogy, curriculum is always a product of multiple influences, not the least of which are social and political forces and dominant values of a particular society, **culture**, and historical period. This is why curriculum is such a contested area, because consciously or unconsciously those who develop, adopt or espouse a particular curriculum see its power to influence what children learn and how they learn it. Critical and postmodern perspectives on curriculum, including early childhood curriculum, have drawn attention to gender-related, cultural, and political biases within the dominant curriculum models. Because early childhood education is commonly viewed as preparation for later schooling, changes in curriculum in the higher grades often influence what is taught in the early years, giving rise to an increasing emphasis on **academics**, or, what has been called “push-down curriculum.” This phenomenon has been seen both in the United States and in other countries where curriculum reform and changes in education policy have occurred in primary and secondary education.

Dimensions on Which Curricula May Differ

Whatever the sources of early childhood curriculum, curriculum models (which tend to offer an organized implementation plan) or approaches (which tend to offer an organized framework with considerable flexibility in its implementation) may differ on many dimensions. Some of these are (1) the relative explicitness or structure inherent in the curriculum; (2) comprehensiveness (whether the curriculum is designed to address many areas of development and learning or only one); (3) the relative balance of teacher- and child-initiated activity; (4) the relative focus on subject matter, versus a focus on developmental domains; (5) the relative focus on integration across subject matter or content areas versus subject-specific

organization; and (6) the degree to which the curriculum is evidence-based and has been evaluated for effectiveness.

Curriculum Mandates and Implementation

Many countries have adopted a national or state curriculum. These include curricula for children of primary-grade age and older and, increasingly, for early childhood programs, although the curriculum may be implemented in a variety of ways. Indonesia, for example, has a national curriculum for what are called “kindergartens” (mostly private programs for 4–6-year-old children), with specific guidance on weekly topics of study, skills, and concepts to emphasize, and activities. England has introduced a national framework for an early year’s curriculum, with specified outcomes and learning goals. New Zealand’s early childhood system relies on a curriculum framework called Te Whariki, which includes core principles that may be implemented in a variety of culturally relevant ways (see Volume 4).

The United States differs from many other countries in that there are no federal or state mandates to adopt one specific curriculum. In the United States, however, programs that receive federal or state funds usually are required to adopt some kind of curriculum, with some states providing specific criteria, or with a list of preapproved curricula from which programs may select. Additionally, programs seeking **accreditation** through the National Association for the Education of Young Children must show that they have a written statement of philosophy and use one or more written curricula or curriculum frameworks consistent with their philosophy that address central aspects of child development.

Curriculum Comparison Research

There have been a number of efforts to compare different curriculum models to determine the superiority of one versus another. To date, the results have been inconclusive. Some researchers have claimed that studies support the superiority of child-centered or constructivist models in comparison to didactic, adult-directed curricula. However, the National Research Council’s 2001 report, *Eager to Learn: Educating our preschoolers*, did not find the overall evidence compelling. Without endorsing one kind of curriculum over another, what this report and others have emphasized is the value of programs’ using some kind of well-defined and intentionally implemented curriculum.

Efforts to validate specific curriculum models or approaches are continuing, consistent with the United States trend toward evidence-based practices and “scientific research” as a basis for educational practice. However, recent research seems to be moving away from efforts to prove the absolute superiority of one curriculum, toward efforts to examine more complex questions, such as which curricula may be effective with which children under which conditions. Several federally funded programs of research in the United States are examining such questions. The research is also beginning to look at some new approaches to “integrated” curricula, for example combining an existing **literacy** curriculum with a curriculum to promote social and emotional competence.

Continuing Issues

Several issues in early childhood curriculum will continue to engage researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in the coming years. The relative merits of a flexible “**emergent**” curriculum, in comparison to a more explicit, preplanned curriculum, have been and will continue to be debated; the forthcoming results from early childhood curriculum research are unlikely to put this debate to rest. As in a number of other areas in early childhood education, the discussion seems to be shifting away from an either-or stance (with a completely open approach to curriculum on the one extreme, and a tightly scripted curriculum at the other) toward recognition of a continuum of valid curriculum approaches. Increasingly in the United States at least, some make a case that “scaffolding” teachers’ practice with a relatively preplanned curriculum may be a useful alternative with a workforce characterized by low education and high turnover. Within a developmental perspective, this scaffolding is said to give beginning teachers the opportunity to be successful while increasingly personalizing or modifying the curriculum as they gain experience and pedagogical competence.

The increasing diversity of young children related to demographic shifts, **immigration**, and the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs, will also pose continuing challenges and questions. Much curriculum research has been conducted with relatively homogeneous samples, leaving open the question of whether curricula need further differentiation to support the learning of children whose home language is not English, or children with physical or cognitive disabilities. In the United States, the recent reauthorization of the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (IDEA) further underscores the right of every child to have access to what is called the “general curriculum.” Strategies to ensure this access will continue to be developed and debated.

Increasingly, the early childhood field recognizes that professional development is essential if teachers are to implement curriculum effectively. However, little consensus exists about the most effective content and format for that professional development, and curriculum developers vary in the resources or supports provided. Additionally, different curricula make quite different demands on staff expertise; for example, a “scripted” curriculum may be relatively easier for staff to learn to implement than one that makes higher demands for on-the-spot decision making (e.g., Tools of the Mind, High/Scope, the Reggio Emilia approach, and the **Project Approach**). However, some argue that the value of these more complex approaches to curriculum makes an investment in extended professional development worthwhile. Questions such as these require continued discussion and systematic investigation.

Recommendations of Professional Organizations and Other Bodies about Early Childhood Curriculum

Within these areas of controversy and continuing research, professional bodies have taken positions and created guidelines for early childhood curriculum. For example, in 2003 the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments

of Education developed a position statement and recommendations about early childhood curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation. Specific to curriculum, the document recommends that early childhood programs “Implement curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children” (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003). Specific indicators of effective curriculum are that children are active and engaged; goals are clear and shared by all; curriculum is evidence-based; valued content is learned through investigation and focused, intentional teaching; curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences; curriculum is comprehensive; professional standards validate the curriculum’s subject-matter content; and the curriculum is likely to benefit children.

Additionally, the Council for Exceptional Children’s **Division for Early Childhood** (DEC) has created a companion piece to the NAEYC and NAECS/SDE position statement, making more explicit recommendations about curriculum that includes and supports young children with disabilities. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) has created a policy brief that provides similar guidance to policy-makers and others who are making decisions about adopting or developing curriculum. Together, these recommendations reflect some growing consensus—although not unanimity—about curriculum priorities, at least within the United States early childhood community. The results of continuing curriculum research, as well as the experiences of other countries and changes in education policies, will continue to inform curriculum development and implementation. *See also* Disabilities, Young Children with.

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Marilou Hyson

Curriculum, Emergent

Contemporary interpretations of an *emergent curriculum* draw on the ideals of **progressive education** and **child-centered pedagogy**. The term *emergent curriculum* was introduced to the field of early childhood education by Elizabeth Jones in her introduction to the book *Curriculum Is What Happens* (Dittmann, 1970) and later more completely in the book *Emergent Curriculum* (Jones and Nimmo, 1994). The term served as a container for exiting practices in the field and helped communicate important theoretical and philosophical ideas in a coherent way.

The adoption of the traditional term “curriculum” was intended to shift the frame of reference from teacher-directed, written plans focused on narrow educational objectives to conceptualizing curriculum as all that actually happened in a child’s day. An underlying assumption of the approach is that preplanned curriculum can lead to educational standardization and less attention to the diversity of children’s experiences and abilities (Jones, Evans, and Stritzel Rencken, 2001). Rather than having curriculum content defined *apriori* by external bodies, experts or frameworks, the emergent approach sees content as virtually infinite for young children. Specific curriculum decisions are negotiated locally by teachers and learners based on their documentation and assessment of the context and through a consideration of the community’s educational values.

The foundation of *Emergent Curriculum* in a child-centered pedagogy is best demonstrated in the focus on children’s active engagement in **play**. Play is viewed as a context in which young children take the lead in exploring, representing, and solving meaningful problems. While Emergent Curriculum shares many of the tenets of other child-centered approaches by highlighting curriculum content that is designed from children’s emerging ideas, questions and problems, the term goes further by acknowledging the significance of other contextual sources for curriculum. These sources include the physical and social environment, serendipitous events, social problems, cultural and community values, and the interests and skills of teachers and other significant adults. In the preface to the Chinese translation of *Emergent Curriculum*, Nimmo, Jones, and Li-Chen (2003) write that children’s observations and questions emerge “out of a unique context that speaks to important differences in family, local community, history and culture” (p. 6). In this respect, Emergent Curriculum also shares underlying assumptions with culturally relevant/responsive models (Ladson-Billings, 1994), which emphasize the grounding of curriculum and pedagogy in an understanding of children’s prior knowledge, cultural values and history, and learning styles.

Emergent Curriculum has been differentiated from other social constructivist approaches such as the Project Spectrum model (based on the theories of Gardner

and Feldman) and the **Reggio Emilia** approach because it has been viewed by some educators as requiring a more passive or minimized role for the teacher (Chen, Krechevsky, and Viens, 1998, p.29). While the term itself grammatically suggests this passive orientation, the associated practice and writings acknowledge the significance of an intentional planning process and the need for negotiation between teachers and learners in determining content and teaching strategies. The terms negotiated curriculum (Forman and Fyfe, 1998) and *progettazione* (Rinaldi, 1998) have been proposed as concepts that more effectively capture this active role of the teacher in curriculum development.

While Emergent Curriculum does not advocate specific pedagogical strategies, there is a clear focus on constructivist and social constructivist practices such as those inspired by the experiences from the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, including documentation and collaboration (Rinaldi, 1993). The spontaneity and flexibility of teachers in being able to adapt to and respond to the unexpected and unplanned is viewed as an important pedagogical skill and disposition (Jones, 1986). Emergent Curriculum is complementary to the **Project Approach** (Katz and Chard, 2000) but differs in its emphasis on deriving curriculum from sources that are relevant and meaningful to young children and their context. The specific structures and techniques of the Project Approach, which focus on in-depth projects and an inquiry orientation, can be applied, but the Emergent Curriculum also acknowledges everyday social activity, play, and other isolated classroom experiences that may not be conceptualized as forming specific projects or investigations. See Pedagogy, Child-Centered.

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Curriculum, Emotional Development

Although the place of emotions in early childhood curriculum has been debated, recent child development research provides convincing evidence that young children's emotional competence is key to their later competence, not just in the emotional domain but in social and academic areas as well (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2001). To support positive development and learning, early childhood education programs must therefore implement curriculum that effectively promotes emotional competence, whatever the other goals of the curriculum.

The Emotion-Centered Tradition in Early Childhood Education

In U.S. early childhood education, early childhood programs have traditionally emphasized five components: the emotional nature of teacher-child relationships; activities to meet children's emotional needs; open expression of feelings by children and adults; the development of positive affective states and dispositions; and awareness of children's emotional responses (Hyson, 2003). Although their specific forms have been influenced by cultural contexts, these components have also been prominent in non-U.S. early childhood education programs. Yet this traditional emphasis is at risk. In a social policy report from the Society for Research in Child Development, Raver (2002) concludes that "psychologists' and educators' emphasis on cognition and on children's academic preparedness continues to overshadow the importance of children's social and emotional development for early school readiness" (p. 3). For this reason, many urge that a research-based focus on emotions should permeate the early childhood curriculum.

Focusing on Emotions within the Early Childhood Curriculum

"Emotional curriculum" or "emotion-centered curriculum" does not necessarily require the creation of a separate curriculum about feelings. Indeed, the research on early emotional development suggests that a focus on emotional competence should be infused throughout the curriculum rather than being added on in an isolated or disconnected way. A synthesis of this research would recommend the following as the primary goals of any curriculum that aims to support young children's emotional competence:

1. *Creating a secure emotional environment.* If adults create an emotionally secure climate, children are able to explore and learn.
2. *Helping children to understand emotions.* If adults promote emotional understanding, children have insight into their own and others' feelings, becoming more empathic and socially competent.
3. *Modeling genuine, appropriate emotional responses.* If adults show authentic emotions, and if they are effective models, children are likely to adopt appropriate ways of showing their feelings.
4. *Supporting children's regulation of emotions.* If adults gradually guide children toward self-regulation, children will gain skills that support healthy development in multiple domains.

5. *Recognizing and honoring children's expressive styles.* If adults respect individual differences in emotional expressiveness, while promoting culturally and developmentally appropriate expression, children are nurtured and supported.
6. *Uniting children's learning with positive emotions.* If adults give children many opportunities to experience the joys and overcome the frustrations of new learning experiences, they are better able to persist at tasks and seek out challenges.

Associations between Curriculum Emphases and Emotional Outcomes

Early childhood educators have adopted a variety of curriculum models and approaches to teaching. As summarized in Hyson, Copple, and Jones (2006), several programs of research have examined relationships between the emphasis of a specific early childhood curriculum (especially along the dimensions of teacher-directed vs. child-focused) and the likelihood that the teacher has warm, emotionally positive relationships with children. For example, in studies in which the emotional climate of the preschool classroom was rated along with other features of the curriculum and teaching practices, classrooms with higher levels of adult direction and formal instruction were significantly less likely to be characterized by teacher-child affection and warmth.

In other studies, highly didactic, basic-skills-oriented curricula that emphasized individual success and failure were associated with less teacher warmth and nurturance toward children and less attention to their individual needs than in the more child-focused classrooms. Furthermore, children's motivation suffered in these contexts. Children in these classrooms tended to rate their own academic skills lower than children in classrooms that offered more choice as well as greater acceptance and, when given a choice, they avoided challenging tasks.

Despite these trends, it is impossible to conclude that the only curriculum approach that supports close teacher-child relationships is a strongly child-centered one. It has not been possible to disentangle curriculum approach from emotional climate, since these two variables have been so strongly correlated. There are now a greater number of early childhood programs that cannot neatly be categorized as "child-centered" versus "didactic," including those influenced by Vygotskian and other social-constructivist perspectives, the educational approaches of the Italian **Reggio Emilia** preschools, and revisions to **The National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices**. These programs place greater emphasis on teachers' active promotion of cognitive and academic competencies through scaffolding, reflection, and representation, while embedding these in first-hand experiences linked to young children's interests and within the context of play and rich social interaction. However, the emotional climate and motivational impact of these curricula have not yet been systematically studied.

Specifically Designed Curricula or Programs to Support Emotional Competence

A number of U.S. researchers have recently developed and attempted to validate specific classroom-level interventions designed to support young children's emotional competence. The following points should be kept in mind when considering or adopting any intervention or prevention program (adapted from Raver, 2002):

- High-quality early education, including a rich, emotion-focused curriculum, provides the foundation to which more specific interventions may be added. Caring, emotionally knowledgeable teachers and a classroom climate that addresses and integrates the broad goals of emotional competence are essential.
- Research indicates that the most effective emotional-competence programs go beyond commercial packages that simply teach children names for feelings and that encourage children to “use words” to resolve conflicts. At least with elementary-age children, such programs are relatively ineffective when used in isolation. Effective programs require investment in professional development; link classroom lessons with games or other activities to build self-control and other skills; and coordinate classroom-level interventions with parent training and support. As compared with more limited interventions, such programs are expensive, but research indicates that the investment is worthwhile.
- An approach that has shown very positive results is to combine universal programs (for all children in a classroom or school) with more intensive intervention, in school and with families, for a smaller number of children who seem to be at greater risk for emotional difficulties.
- Although the programs described below have shown positive results, those who intend to adopt an emotional-competence program should consider whether the evaluations were conducted in settings that were demographically similar to those in which the program has been used and evaluated.
- High-intensity clinical interventions, perhaps using school-based early childhood mental health consultants, are recommended for young children at high risk of serious emotional problems, often because of family adversity. However, researchers emphasize that such interventions must avoid inappropriate labeling or stigmatizing children and must address family needs as well as those of individual children.

Below are three examples of classroom-level interventions designed to support young children’s emotional competence. Evaluations have shown at least some positive effects for each of these programs.

Floor Time (program developer: Stanley Greenspan, M.D.). Also termed the Developmental Individual-Difference, Relationship-Based Model (DIR, commonly referred to as the “Floor Time” approach, Greenspan and Weider, 1998), focuses on helping all children, but especially those with disabilities such as autism, develop relationships and emotional communication. The goals of the one-on-one “Floor Time” intervention are to help the child become more alert; take more initiative; become more flexible; tolerate frustration; sequence and execute actions; communicate gesturally and verbally; and take pleasure in learning. Parents and other adults learn how to use individual interactions with a child (with or without disabilities) to support these goals.

The Incredible Years (program developer: Carolyn Webster-Stratton, Ph.D., University of Washington). The “Incredible Years” program provides comprehensive training for parents, teachers, and children ages 3–8, focused on improving children’s emotional and behavioral adjustment. Programs include videotapes, activities for parents and children, and other school- and home-based materials. Empathy, problem solving, and anger management are among the areas of emphasis for children. The program has been evaluated in **Head Start** settings (Webster-Stratton, Reid, and Hammond, 2001).

PATHS (providing alternative thinking strategies) (program developer: Mark Greenberg, Ph.D., Penn State Prevention Research Center). This curriculum was originally developed for elementary-age children, adapted for preschool (*Preschool PATHS*), and tested in Head Start programs (Kusche and Greenberg, in press). Using “PATHS characters” and other tools, curriculum units teach self-regulation (the Turtle technique), emotion awareness and communication, problem-solving, positive identity and peer relations. The curriculum also aims to promote a positive classroom atmosphere that supports social emotional learning.

Conclusion

Considerable research supports the importance of incorporating specific emotional competence goals into early childhood curriculum. Two complementary approaches appear to be effective. First is what might be called a universal or broadband approach in which an emphasis on emotions permeates and is integrated into all other aspects of the early childhood curriculum. Second, a number of well-validated interventions may be incorporated into this broadband approach, with the intensity of intervention being influenced by the needs of individual children. *See also* Vygotsky, Lev.

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Marilou Hyson

Curriculum, Literacy

The topic of early literacy curriculum is one that recently has come to the forefront of educational policy decisions in response to concerns about literacy levels in various countries, especially the United States. Research reveals that educational responses to and expectations of young children reflect deeply held cultural values and beliefs, including assumptions about what is normative, necessary, and developmentally appropriate (New, 2001). Conceptions of the

how and what of U.S. early childhood education have historically varied as a function of which children are being served and for what purposes. U.S. children of preschool age (3–5 years) continue to be the recipients of diverse and competing interpretations of **curriculum** and **pedagogy**, ranging from programs described as play based and child centered to those characterized by various forms of direct instruction and behavior modification.

While scholars in recent years have contributed a wealth of knowledge about the processes associated with the acquisition of literacy skills and knowledge within children’s “social spheres,” teachers remain unclear about the nature of developmentally appropriate literacy practices in the classroom. Disagreements over the extent to which literacy instruction is necessary or even appropriate for young children reflect theoretical, political, and cultural interpretations of the purposes of literacy and early childhood education in the lives of young children and families. This eclectic approach to early education not only represents contrasting and changing theoretical interpretations of children’s learning. Such program diversity is also directly linked to the pluralistic nature of U.S. society and associated judgments about children’s needs as a function of race, income, language, and ability.

When asked what should be taught in early childhood programs, most parents and practitioners would suggest that the early childhood curriculum should address social, emotional, and physical development as well as **cognitive development**. Until recently, few people would have gone much beyond mentioning reading aloud to young children as a specific literacy activity to be included in daily curricular planning. However, literacy development in early childhood has captured significant attention in recent years on the part of teachers, education researchers, families, and politicians. Learning to read and write up until about 1990 was seen as the domain of first and second grade with some preparatory work being done in kindergarten. Proper formation of letters while printing was emphasized, but not until after a child had successfully learned to read. The idea of “reading readiness” dominated the field of education and dictated that literacy learning was clearly a school subject in which instruction focused exclusively on the sequenced mastery of skills while ignoring the functional uses of reading (Teale and Sulzby, 1986).

The concept of reading readiness has been challenged by growing interest and new research conducted within the first few years of life. Studies showing the period from birth through the preschool years as an important period of development played a central role in the deepening understanding of cognitive approaches to issues of learning and development, and validated the premise that literacy understandings develop in the course of every day life (Teale and Sulzby, 1986).

At the turn of the twenty-first century the International Reading Association (IRA) and the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** published a joint statement, *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children* (Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp, 2000), which served as a milestone in its recognition of early literacy as a developmental domain in early childhood. This joint statement summarized the research on early literacy and explicated a set of benchmarks for early literacy

learning along with broad recommendations for parents, educators, and policy-makers. For the most part, however, this is the point where agreement stops as literacy in early childhood has become a contested topic in politics as well as academics.

It is important within this discussion to clarify the meaning of “literacy.” Brian Street (1995) describes two divergent models of literacy learning. In the first, literacy is described as an autonomous set of skills to be mastered that lead to progress, civilization and social mobility. Literacy in this model can be studied in its technical aspects outside of social context. In the second model, literacy is described as ideological in that literacy practices are inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in any given society where any number of standard practices are used by people during literacy “events,” which are themselves “situated in broader social contexts and social relations” (Barton, 1994, p. 35). The technical skills and cognitive aspects of literacy are not denied within this model, but cannot be viewed outside of or separately from the social, political, and cultural setting in which they occur. This theoretical understanding helps to explain the successes of some children, such as those from middle-class homes, in acquiring the literacy skills, attitudes, and understandings that prepare them for success in school-base literacy practices. The recognition in recent years that some children are not entering school with the types of linguistic and literacy experiences that prepare them for school success has led to an increased demand for a formalized curriculum for early childhood classrooms that can provide the identified necessary experiences. High quality early literacy instruction for all children, but especially for those identified as being “at risk” for school failure, is currently viewed as the necessary preventative measure needed to combat reading failure. This message is prominent in the seminal book *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow et al., 1998).

The word “curriculum” can be defined in accordance with the theoretical models of literacy described above. From the autonomous view, curriculum can be described as a course of study, which includes the planned interaction of students with instructional content, materials, and resources to meet certain educational objectives. This course of study can be used by all children in any setting since it is assumed that literacy means the same thing everywhere. Thus, publishing companies are able to develop and sell early literacy curriculum in any school district in this country and assure the local school board that it will meet their needs. From the ideological viewpoint, this does not hold true. Curriculum and the surrounding decisions about what that encompasses would need to be made within a specific social/cultural setting by parents, educators, and policymakers within that setting as they define that nature of early childhood education and the meaning and importance of literacy within that setting.

An examination of reading curriculum used in the primary grades in elementary school for the last few decades reveals the nature of the controversies surrounding literacy learning as it has been enacted in schools across the country. The term “reading wars” describes an educational and political battle that continues to occur between proponents of a phonics emphasis in reading and a whole language emphasis. During the 1950s, reading instruction was dominated by the Dick and Jane basal readers which emphasized a “whole word” approach to teaching reading in which stories with tightly controlled vocabularies repeated words on

each page so that, according to behaviorist research, students would eventually remember them. This model for teaching reading was criticized and eventually replaced by curriculum that focused on a “bottom up” approach that emphasized students’ phonemic awareness—an understanding of the alphabetic principle that the spelling of words relates to how they sound when spoken. While knowing the rules of phonics helps children to sound out some words, an estimated one-half of the words in the English language cannot be sounded out accurately using these rules. In contrast to this method, the whole language approach to teaching reading was developed, based on the theory of **constructivism**. Within this methodology, emphasis is placed on students constructing meaning from text and teachers providing a literacy rich environment that combines speaking, listening, reading and writing into literacy learning. In this approach, phonics instruction becomes only one component of literacy instruction. Research has clearly established that no one method of instruction is superior for all children, and that approaches that favor some type of systematic code instruction along with meaningful connected reading report children’s superior progress in reading (Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp, 2000). An understanding of how children develop early literacy learning can put a stop to these “reading wars.”

Unfortunately, current policies in the U.S. Department of Education such as **No Child Left Behind** and **Early Reading First** are reflections of an acceptance on the part of policymakers of the autonomous model of literacy learning for young children. The current emphasis on early literacy education as an answer to later school failure problems can be seen in three current federal government initiatives. First, in 1998, the **Head Start** reauthorization changed Head Start’s purpose from providing comprehensive developmental services for low-income children to promoting school **readiness** by enhancing the social and cognitive development of low-income children. Changes in Head Start policies reflect an increasing emphasis on language and **literacy**. The 2003 reauthorization describes prereading and language skills as instructional content and specifically mentions the use of scientifically based programs that support school readiness.

The second federal initiative, **Good Start, Grow Smart**, began in 2002 and is an early learning plan designed to address three major areas: strengthening Head Start and other child-care programs, partnering with states to improve early childhood education and providing information to teachers, caregivers, and parents in the areas of early language and literacy learning. One of the objectives of this initiative is the identification of the most effective prereading and language curricula and teaching strategies for early education through rigorous experimental methods. **Good Start, Grow Smart** has introduced changes in early childhood educational practices by advocating testing of young children’s early reading skills, the application of research-based methods in teaching young children, and professional development for teachers in literacy pedagogy.

Finally, **Early Reading First**, which was established in the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**, was designed as a program to prepare young children at risk of school failure to enter kindergarten with the necessary cognitive, language, and early literacy skills for success in school. This program specifically has as its goal the prevention of later reading difficulties. Preschool programs that are awarded this grant must use a research-based curriculum which includes systematic, intentional instruction in certain identified essential prereading skills—letter recognition;

rhyming, blending and segmenting of sounds; complex vocabulary; and print concepts. Additionally, it requires the use of reliable, valid **assessments** to screen children and to monitor progress in the acquisition of these specific skills. Finally, it requires professional development for teachers in the “scientific approach” to early literacy pedagogy so that teachers are able to implement early literacy curriculum and assessments that have scientifically based reading research as their foundation. Early Reading First is designed to complement the Reading First program whose intent is to incorporate scientifically based reading research to improve and expand reading programs at the primary school level. Reading First has been the subject of ongoing controversy centering on its perceived “overprescriptiveness” as it is administered and allegations of conflicts of interest between consultants to the program and commercial reading and assessment companies. Opponents suggest that schools participating in Reading First have been all but forced to buy textbooks and related materials from a handful of large publishers, several of which have retained top federal advisers as authors, editors or consultants. This same controversy has the potential to spill into Early Reading First if grant applicants are coerced in the application process to select only certain commercially published curricula.

Curriculum decisions in early childhood literacy should include a sound understanding of up-to-date knowledge about how children learn, what the goals of that learning should be, the roles of the teacher and students within the curriculum, descriptions of the learning activities and environment, and the methods of evaluation that will be used to assess student learning. Three learning principles have been suggested in a recent report from the National Research Council (Bowman et al., 2001) which can guide curricular decisions. First, children develop ideas and concepts at very young ages that help them make sense of their world. Curricula should be evaluated on the extent to which they draw out and build on children’s existing ideas. Next, developing expertise requires both a foundation of factual knowledge and skills and a conceptual understanding that allows facts to become usable knowledge. Curricula can be judged on the extent to which they promote learning of concepts as well as information and skills. Finally, children can be taught to monitor their thinking in the form of learning strategies, and thus efforts to help children learn more deliberately should be built into curricula.

Other related research in the area of early literacy learning suggests that knowledge of certain skills correlates with success in learning to read, for example, alphabet letter recognition, phonemic awareness, oral language skills (receptive and expressive as well as vocabulary), and concepts of print (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998). Finally, researchers suggest that experiences with storybook reading, discussions about books, listening comprehension, and writing are all crucial in early literacy development. All these factors should guide the development of early literacy curricula that respond to children’s developmental and cultural needs. Effective literacy instruction must integrate learning the code of written language with uses and purposes of literacy that are meaningful to the learner. This instructional principle relates directly back to the ideological model of literacy with its context specific definition of literacy.

Writing development has recently been considered a part of early literacy curriculum, a significant change from past policies that limited writing activities

to a focus on proper letter formation and spelling after a child had begun to read. Many educators now encourage young children's interest in writing because it serves to foster development of various print concepts such as left-to-right directionality, phonemic awareness as children use invented spellings based on sounding words out, and alphabet letter knowledge even among three-year-olds who endeavor to write their names. Additionally, when young children write, they experience first hand the connections between reading, writing, and oral language as they come to understand the various purposes for these activities. Literacy environments that promote writing development in young children are those that set aside time, space, and materials for children to use. Also important are adults in the classroom who model writing for young children and who plan meaningful ways for children to engage in writing events. From a developmental standpoint, educators currently understand that young children begin to write when they scribble on paper, use gestures to symbolize meaning, and name objects that they have drawn. As with all other literacy activities, it is a socially and culturally situated event.

When planning early literacy curriculum, one aspect of early learning that must be considered is the influence of the environment of the child on this learning. For example, research suggests that families differ in the extent to which the literacy activities provided in the home prepare young children for school-based practices (Heath, 1982; Snow, Hamphil, and Barnes, 1991). The literacy styles found in families from mainstream culture complement the practices used in preschool and primary grades and therefore, children from these homes begin school with the advantage of similarity between life experiences and interactional styles in school and at home (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2001). Since literacy is viewed as activities that are embedded in a social and cultural context, it is obvious that literacy experiences will vary between cultures as parents provide children with opportunities to acquire literacy abilities that are pertinent to their lives. These activities often do not match those found in schools, and this mismatch may lead to difficulties for specific groups of children. An understanding of this issue leads to a realization that a "one size fits all" literacy curriculum will not meet the needs of all children in a diverse society like ours. Instead, by designing literacy curriculum at a local level, teachers can learn about the literacy practices and beliefs of the families they serve and the community in which the children live, and then incorporate these into the classroom to help bridge the children's experiences at home and school. Courtney Cazden's several decades of research (2001), for example, points out the misunderstandings that teachers can have about narrative styles from different cultures, while Anne Dyson's work (1993) suggests the importance of pop culture and peer relations in primary school children's writing development.

Finally, in the consideration of what can be described and included in early literacy curricula, other forms of literacy must be incorporated. For example, various types of video technology as well as computer technology cannot be left out in a time when children begin to use such forms of literacy beginning in infancy. When literacy is viewed through an ideological lens, new forms of literacy can continuously be added to the curricula in response to changes in societies and cultures.

Summary

Literacy learning begins long before children enter school and is a complex and multifaceted process that is strongly influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which it occurs. Curricula that address the needs of early literacy learners must be developed with an understanding of the global developmental learning framework that supports children's growth and the unique cultural settings in which this growth takes place. Additionally, the unique needs of the individual child must be considered. Research has provided broad understandings of the importance of early language interactions and the significance of reading aloud with young children, but these understandings and principles must be interpreted on a local level. Curricular frameworks can be developed to guide well-trained education professionals in planning literacy learning for young children, but a "one size fits all" curriculum cannot successfully meet the learning needs of children in a diverse society. *See also* Curriculum, Physical Development; Development, Emotional; Development, Language; Development, Social; Pedagogy, Activity-Based/Experiential; Pedagogy, Child-Centered; Peers and Friends; Curriculum, Technology.

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Curriculum, Mathematics

Mathematics curricula for early childhood is an area of substantial recent research and development activity. For example, re-stimulated by research demonstrating that achievement gaps between children from low- and higher-resource

communities begin in the earliest years, developers recently have produced a wide variety of innovative preschool curricula. Such flurries of activity may mislead some people to believe that early childhood mathematics is a new phenomenon. However, history shows that mathematics, as well as conflicts about the type of mathematical experiences that should be provided, have long histories in early education.

Conflicts stemmed from different opinions of the appropriateness of mathematics for young children. Negative opinions usually were based on broad social theories or trends, not observation or study of children. Those who actually worked with young children historically provided a rich mathematics curriculum. For example, mathematics was pervasive in the work of Friedrich **Froebel**, the founder of **kindergarten** (which originally included children from three to seven years of age). Froebel's fundamental gifts were largely mathematical manipulatives and his occupations were mathematical explorations and constructions. As early childhood education was institutionalized, these deep mathematical ideas were largely forgotten or diluted. For example, in the first half of the twentieth century, U.S. psychologist Edward **Thorndike** wrote about learning as associations that were strengthened or weakened by consequences such as rewards. His implications for education was to do things directly. To emphasize health, he suggested replacing the first Froebelian gift (small spheres) with a toothbrush and the first occupation with "sleep." The mathematical foundation of the gifts was thus ignored.

Froebel was a crystallographer. Almost every aspect of his kindergarten crystallized into mathematical forms—the "universal, perfect, alternative language of geometric form." Its ultimate aim was to instill in children an understanding of what an earlier generation would have called "the music of the spheres"—the mathematically generated logic underlying the ebb and flow of creation. Froebel used "gifts" to teach children the geometric language of the universe, moving from solids (spheres, cylinders, cubes) to surfaces, lines, and points, then the moving back again. Cylinders, spheres, cubes, and other materials were arranged and moved to show these geometric relationships. His mathematically oriented occupations with such materials included explorations (e.g., spinning the solids in different orientations, showing how, for example, the spun cube can appear as a cylinder), puzzles, paper folding, and constructions. Structured activities would follow that provided exercises in basic number, arithmetic, and geometry, as well as the beginning of reading. For example, the cubes that children had made into the chairs and stoves would be made into a geometric design on the grid etched into every kindergarten table, and later laid into two rows of four each and expressed as " $4 + 4$." In this way, connections were key: the "chair" became an aesthetic geometric design, which became part of a number sentence.

Consider several other examples. Children covered the faces of cubes with square tiles, and peeled them away to show parts, properties, and congruence. Many blocks and tiles were in carefully planned shapes that fit in the grid in different ways. "All the blocks and sticks and rings and slats were used in plain view on the ever-present grid of the kindergarten table, arranged and rearranged into shifting, kaleidoscopic patterns or decorative, geometric borders" (Brosterman, 1997, p. 38). Using these materials, Froebel developed skills that had been—and usually remain to this day—reserved for students in higher grades.

Another example of an historical curriculum material that emphasizes mathematics is the building block set. Children create forms and structures that are based on mathematical relationships. For example, children may struggle with length relationships in finishing a wall. Length and equivalence are involved in substituting two shorter blocks for one long block. Children also consider height, area, and volume. The inventor of today's unit blocks, **Caroline Pratt**, tells of children making enough room for a toy horse to fit inside a stable. In Pratt's example, the teacher told preschooler Diana that she could have the horse when she had made a stable for it. Diana and Elizabeth began to build a small construction, but the horse did not fit. Diana had made a large stable with a low roof. After several unsuccessful attempts to get the horse in, she removed the roof, added blocks to the walls to make the roof higher, and replaced the roof. She then tried to put into words what she had done: "Roof too small." The teacher gave her new words, "high" and "low" and she gave a new explanation to the other children. Just building with blocks, children form important ideas. Teachers such as Diana's who discuss these ideas with children, giving words to their actions, can foster such intuitive ideas through constructive **play**. With such materials and through teacher guidance, children can be helped to distinguish between different quantities such as height, area, and volume.

As part of K-12 schools, mathematics education in the primary grades has its own historical path. In the colonial times, counting and simple arithmetic was taught, but not usually to girls. Between 1815 and 1820, U.S. educators revised the teaching of arithmetic in response to the Swiss reformer Joseph **Pestalozzi**. Warren Colburn's text, for example, started with practical examples, used objects (manipulatives) for solutions, and asked students to explain how they solved problems. However, many teachers failed to understand the reform efforts, and routine pedagogy remained common. At this time, "stimulus-response" theory, built on Thorndike, dominated psychology, and its effects were seen in the emphasis on drill procedures in arithmetic textbooks (reflecting a limited understand of even that limited theory).

From the 1920s, social utility theory influenced curricula to focus on those skills needed in everyday life. Emphasis was on practical use, but not on mathematics as a discipline or students' understanding. In the 1930s, Gestalt theory, which focused on insight and relationships, led to recommendations by mathematics educators such as William Brownell that understanding of mathematics principles was a key foundation for learning.

Jean **Piaget**'s research led to a renewed focus on children's thinking about mathematics. Mathematics curricula based on his theories took many forms. Some consisted almost solely on attempting to teach children to correctly respond to Piagetian tasks, such as number conservation, seriation, and classification. Others emphasized the constructivist philosophy of Piaget, and emphasized child-centered exploration. In a more recent extension of that approach, Kamii offers everyday experiences and games that encourage children to construct notions of number, and physical knowledge experiences such as bowling, balancing cubes, and pick-up sticks, for low-achieving young children before they experience any specific mathematical content. Evaluations of these approaches have been positive.

The constructivist theories of Piaget and **Bruner** motivated developers in the mid-twentieth century to incorporate “discovery learning,” emphasizing process goals and students’ exploration and invention of solution methods. The “space race” led to several different curriculum modifications, from those that emphasized the structure of mathematics itself (e.g., set theory in the “new math”) to those that build upon new psychological insights and reform movements to build new types of manipulatives (e.g., the “geoboard” and base ten blocks) and tasks for mathematics education. Thus, there were a variety of curricula through the 1960s and 1970s, although many shared at least some characteristics, such as increased emphasis on mathematical structures and precision, guided discovery approaches, and moving content to lower grade levels. “Laboratory” curriculum materials continued to be developed up to 1980, but excesses of some of these approaches led to some curricula following a “back to basics” approach.

Since that time, two main types of primary-grade curricula have been developed. The first type includes commercially published, traditional text books, which still dominate mathematics curriculum materials in U.S. classrooms and to a great extent determine teaching practices. Ginsberg and others claim that the most influential publishers are a few large conglomerates that often have profit as their main goal, leading them to follow state curriculum frameworks, attempting to meet every objective of every state—especially those that mandate adherence to their framework. They also tend to be eclectic in their teaching approaches. The second type of curricula includes those developed by researchers and innovators, often with external funding and frequently attempting to follow the reform-oriented positions of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (see www.nctm.org for this and recent recommendations for Curriculum Focal Points). The resulting innovative primary-grade curricula often provide educational experiences that are simultaneously more child-centered and more challenging. Building on children’s mathematical intuitions and problem-solving ability, these curricula ask children to develop their own ideas and strategies, and guide that development toward increasing levels of mathematical sophistication. The curricula develop skills in conjunction with learning the corresponding concepts, because research indicates that learning skills before developing understanding can lead to learning difficulties. Successful innovative curricula and teaching build directly on students’ thinking (the understandings and skills they possess), provide opportunities for both invention and practice, and ask children to explain their various strategies. Such programs facilitate conceptual growth and higher-order thinking without sacrificing the learning of skills. They also pose a broader and deeper range of problems in arithmetic and geometry than traditional curricula. However, they also require a more knowledgeable teacher, and are, perhaps, more vulnerable to misconceptions and therefore misuse, such as believing that accuracy is unimportant. Traditional curricula, which still are used in a majority of schools, have been offering more problem-solving opportunities for students in recent years, but often do not reflect all that is known about teaching and learning early mathematics.

Not traditionally part of the elementary school curriculum, preschool mathematics curricula have followed a different, but related course. Originally based on traditions from Froebel, traditional early childhood practices, and then Piaget,

curriculum development has recently been influenced by newer theories that put number in a foundational role. Such curricula have shown substantial positive effects. For example, in one study, four-year-old children were randomly assigned to one of three educational conditions for eight weeks: Piagetian logical foundations (classification and seriation), number (counting), and control. The logical foundations group significantly outperformed the control group both on measures of conservation and on number concepts and skills. However, inconsistent with Piagetian theory, the number group also performed significantly better than the control group on classification, multiple classification, and seriation tasks as well as on a wide variety of number tasks. Further, there was no significant difference between the experimental groups on the logical operations test and the number group significantly outperformed the logical foundations group on the number test. Thus, the transfer effect from number to classification and seriation was stronger than the reverse. The areas of classes, series, and number appear to be interdependent but experiences in number have priority.

Recent curriculum development and research in preschool mathematics education has built on these beginnings, as well as the wealth of research on young children's learning of mathematics. For example, contemporary curricula emphasize number, geometry, and to a lesser extent, measurement and patterning, because research shows that young children are endowed with intuitive and informal capabilities in these areas and because these areas form the foundation of later mathematical learning. These curricula have helped children make strong, significant gains in each of these various areas of mathematics in their preschool year. Thus, most recently developed research-based preschool curriculum is based on the notion that children have more capability and interest in mathematical activities than often assumed. They consider children to be active builders of mathematics rather than passive receivers of facts and procedures (see **Constructivism**). They ask children to solve mathematical problems, albeit beginning problems, with understanding and talk about what they have done.

Equity has often been a driving force in creating and studying preschool mathematics curricula (see also **Technology Curriculum**). Research indicates that children from low-resources communities who experience a high-quality mathematics curriculum can learn basic mathematical ideas and skills. For example, they learn the number skills, including number recognition, counting, comparison, and simple arithmetic. This closes the gap between children from low-resource and those from higher-resource communities. The development of geometry and spatial sense are also important. Research on the Agam and building blocks curricula show that rich geometric and spatial activities have multiple benefits. Such activities include finding shapes in the environment, from more obvious examples to embedded shapes; reproducing designs with shapes; composing shapes to make pictures, designs, and other shapes; and forming mental images of shapes. Such curricula increase children's knowledge of geometry and spatial skills, including foundations of the visual arts. In addition, they increase children's arithmetic and writing **readiness** capabilities.

Some of these curricula are more structured than others. Some use whole-group instruction, others small-group instruction, often with games. Most have

been successful, if performed in high-quality settings. All approaches have a shared core of concern for children's interest and engagement and content matched to children's cognitive level. Young children benefit from a range of mathematical experiences, from the incidental and informal to the systematic and planned. However, a core of intentional, systematic activities appears to hold particular promise, making unique contributions to children's development.

The ecological perspective suggests that many aspects of the child's environment affect the success of a curriculum. The ecological factor that has most often been identified as influential involves the role of the teacher. Professional development on early mathematics curricula is consistently identified as the main criterion of a high-quality implementation, along with other support for the teacher (see **Interagency Education Research Initiative [IERI]**). Early childhood teachers often lack experiences that develop deep knowledge of the mathematics taught, knowledge of the specific developmental paths of children's learning of that mathematics, and innovative ways of helping children learn mathematics. Indeed, especially for a mainly female group, mathematics is often avoided and viewed as difficult and distasteful. Such knowledge is enhanced when curricula are built around understanding children's development of mathematical ideas and strategies. Family involvement and a classroom environment filled with potential for mathematic explorations are also components of most early mathematics curricula.

In summary, there is a long history of worthwhile mathematics curricula for early childhood, from the preschool years through the primary grades. Achievement gaps between children from low- and higher-resource communities, which begin in the earliest years, lend urgency to building on historical and recent development and research efforts to provide high-quality implementation of innovative curricula to all children.

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Douglas H. Clements and Julie Sarama

Curriculum, Music

Any educational program designed to promote children's development in the broadest sense of the word must include a music curriculum because music is one of the defining features of the human species. Engaging in musical behavior, whether as a producer or a listener, individual or group member, is something that characterizes contemporary life for many people across the world. Irrespective of culture, ethnicity or language group, people—particularly the young—engage in musical behavior for significant amounts of time each day. In part, this is because our brains are designed to pay particular attention to the sounds around us, to detect similarities and differences, construct patterns and structures, and infer meanings and to be engaged emotionally in the available soundscapes, especially music. Like spoken and written language, music is processed simultaneously in many different parts of the brain. Musical processing is not an option, for without such hardwired capabilities, mastering other aspects of our sound world, such as language, would be difficult. Not only is music fundamental to our biological and neural makeup, it is embedded in and shapes the social and cultural patterning of our worlds. Music plays an important role in the construction of identity, in our communicative processes, and in the ways in which we negotiate meaning with self and others. By inference, therefore, if education is about nurturing, developing, and seeking to maximize every aspect of our human potential, then opportunities must be provided in any curriculum for participants to engage in musical thought, action, and interaction. Without the inclusion of music, we neglect a basic facet of what it means to be human.

Musical features dominate children's earliest experiences from prebirth. From the final trimester of fetal life when the auditory systems begin to function, many of the earliest experiences of a world "outside" are musical. This is because the amniotic fluid that surrounds the fetus transfers the melodic contours, rhythmic patterning, and timbral (sound color), and dynamic (volume) variations of the mother's voice, as well as the musical features of any sounds in her immediate vicinity. Research suggests, for example, that in the first six months, infants are able to recognize musical works heard initially in utero, indicating a sensitivity and awareness of the distinctive musical features of the music that they encounter, and a capacity to recall these over time. After birth, as infants begin to make their own sounds and to make sense of, and imitate, the sounds around them, pitch, dynamic, timbral, and melodic and rhythmic patterns continue to be significant. For example, the sounds that our caregivers offer as they interact with infants over the first year of life are musical, containing many of the features of the dominant musical culture, including melodic contours, rhythmic patterning, changes in dynamics and timbre, as well as consonant and dissonant musical intervals.

Part of our human design is that children are not just receptive to music (what music psychologists term music perception, or music philosophers term music appreciation or aesthetic perception). They are also born with a range of different ways of making music, what music psychologists term “generative” and “performative” skill development. The terms “generative” and “performative” indicate that children are born with innate capabilities to produce certain kinds of musical behaviors. This is not surprising, given the variety of different centers in the brain that are devoted to musical processing and the range of music experience that they encounter from the earliest moments of life. In particular, children can master aspects of the dominant musical culture(s) through their singing and imitative musical play (performative), as well as being able to create through composing and improvising (generative) patterns of sounds that have recognizable musical features. This may occur through the use of ‘formal’ instruments (including the voice) or other sound-making objects. Importantly, music experience is not solely confined to the auditory: engagement with music in and through movement and dance is a powerful means of developing responsiveness to music and to sensitizing the body and mind to the rhythmic, temporal, and dynamic possibilities of music. In some cultures, the notion of music and movement as separate entities is considered untenable and for many infants their first experiences of music are intimately connected to movement experience as they are rocked to sleep to the accompaniment of a lullaby, or swayed to the pulse of a communal song.

By the time that young children have reached two years of age, they have had considerable enculturated experience of their immediate sound world, alongside many opportunities to make sound as performers and creators. They are also able to notate these musical explorations and creations using written “symbols.” Their experiences often embrace a wide variety of different musical styles and genres, particularly if they have been growing up in a modern culture in which music and sound media are omnipresent, whether at home, at child care, in playgroup, at worship and celebrations, when traveling in the car, or shopping in the local mall. The outcome is an emerging mastery of many of the dominant features of their musical culture. For example, through regular exposure, most two-year-olds are capable of reproducing simple musical phrases of songs from the home environment, including those encountered through electronic media, such as TV, CDs, and radio. Some two-year-olds are able to sing complete songs in-tune because of the rich musical experiences that they have shared with their caregivers. They are also capable of generating their own “songs” that draw on features of songs that they have heard. By this age also, they are already able to express a liking for musical sounds and to be particularly attentive to certain pieces of music.

Environment and culture continue to shape musical experience and development across successive months. Cantonese-speaking children in Hong Kong aged two to five years, for example, use the same pitch centers in conversational speech as when singing their favorite songs. In contrast, their English-speaking peers develop increasingly distinct pitch centers, with conversational speech lower than their chosen pitch for singing. Similarly, while at play, Euro-American and Asian children tend to make much use of melody in their singing, whereas the play of Afro-American children tends to contain greater emphasis on rhythmic chants.

Importantly, what constitutes musical experience and development differs across cultural and social groups. Consequently, an understanding of the varying ways in which music experience can be defined, described and valued in different social and cultural settings is crucial for educators.

When given the opportunity to make music using simple instruments, preschool children usually focus on an initial exploration of the sonic possibilities and draw on the characteristic rhythmic, melodic, and dynamic features of their musical cultures. This sound making is intentional as the young child manipulates the chosen instrument in order to make sense of, and enjoy, its particular sonic properties and musical possibilities. Preschool children's invented song-making, a common feature of young children's musical experience, draws on musical and textual themes that they encounter in their daily lives. For example, young children may produce "potpourri" songs where elements of a number of known songs are mixed together with original musical and textual ideas. In later work, children tend to abstract elements of known songs (rhythmic, melodic, structural, dynamic), rather than simply reproducing known elements, to produce original "invented" songs.

As mentioned earlier, when provided with the opportunity, young children are also capable of expressing their creative musical ideas in some form of visual symbolization—their own form of musical notation. Typically, initial "invented" notations appear to be scribble-like, before developing with a focus on one particular feature that is perceptually dominant (e.g., dynamic change). With further experience, this develops into a capacity to notate several different musical features at the same time (such as pitch and rhythm). With appropriate structured experience over a relatively short period (three months), preschoolers are capable of developing their notational skills from "scribbles" to more formal symbols that portray distinctive musical features, such as musical pulse (the "beat") or melodic contour. In preschoolers' notation of songs, both invented and known, words tend to predominate, but greater notational variation is evidenced when they are asked to notate the same music from an instrumental source. The presence of language (as song text) can sometimes distract from musical features. Through invented notation experiences, preschoolers are able to record and retrieve meaning over time, and to reflect on their own and others' music making. Such cognitive work assists in shaping musical thought and action for the young child.

While the preschooler's capacity to "talk" about music may be limited, the lack of a specialized vocabulary does not mean that children are not capable of responding insightfully and appreciatively to music listening experience. Early exposure to, and engaged response with, a range of musical forms and genres provides the building blocks of later musical thought and activity. Through the provision of alternative means of responding other than the verbal, children are able to expand their musical vocabulary and to build incrementally a store of musical patterns and possibilities. Nonverbal responses may include movement and dance, drawing, following music maps visually and kinesthetically, conducting, or tracing the musical contour in the air, on the body, on the ground.

Overall, there is a considerable body of research evidence to indicate that young children are not only able to respond to the music that they encounter, they are

also able to reproduce, create, and notate both their own music and components of the music of their dominant musical culture(s). These behaviors are evidenced when opportunities are provided for children to engage in musical exploration and play with a wide range of sound-making artifacts and in a context in which the adults show a keen interest and valuing of children's musical output, acting as "audience" and as comusic-maker, as well as a source of musical ideas and development activities. Young children are not empty vessels that have to be "filled" with music. They are developing musicians who have already acquired considerable skills and understandings informally and who bring to the music learning environment a depth and richness of experience that is often underestimated.

The early music curriculum, therefore, should provide young children with opportunities to explore, play, and engage with a wide variety of musical activities—as composers, improvisers, listeners, movers and dancers, soloists and group members—that build on their early and continuing informal encounters with music. They should be encouraged to create musical narratives that provide evidence to the teacher/caregiver of emergent musical understanding that can then be deepened and developed through further musical engagement. They should be encouraged to engage consciously with a wide range of musical styles and genres as they build the musical vocabulary that will underpin their future musical development. The underlying pedagogical philosophy is for the teacher (or caregiver in non-school contexts) to act as comusic-maker, guide, facilitator and enabler to the richness of musical cultures, rather than assuming a master-apprentice role in which musical knowledge is simply transferred from expert to novice. Children *are* musical!

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Graham F. Welch and Margaret S. Barrett

Curriculum, Physical Development

Although charged with the responsibility of educating the whole child, early childhood professionals have historically focused their efforts on cognitive and social/emotional development (the thinking and feeling child), with physical development (the moving child) receiving much less attention. Preservice training has traditionally done little to prepare teachers to meet children's motor development

and fitness requirements; nor, perhaps, has the need to do so been as great in the past as it currently is.

Today, children's physical development is a topic of increasing concern and attention. Factors associated with this new emphasis include **obesity**, now increasing at faster rates among children than among adults; and research that describes children's major at-home activity as being electronically entertained (an average of thirty-three hours a week). As a result, physical fitness has clearly become the responsibility of all who are involved with children. Moreover, because teachers of preschoolers are often more realistic than parents in their assessment of children's physical activity levels and more influential in the prompting of such activity, early childhood professionals can have a significant impact in this area.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) describes physical fitness as a condition where the body is in a state of well-being and readily able to meet the physical challenges of everyday life. NASPE's (2002) position is that "all children from birth to five years should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills." Their guidelines for physical activities for young children state that young children should not be sedentary for more than sixty minutes at a time, except when sleeping. NASPE recommends that toddlers accumulate daily at least thirty minutes of structured physical activity and at least sixty minutes (and up to several hours) of unstructured physical activity. Preschoolers should engage in the same amount of unstructured activity but accumulate at least sixty minutes daily of structured physical activity.

The difference between unstructured and structured physical activity is that the former is child-initiated and unplanned. For example, on the playground some children may take advantage of the climbing equipment, while others slide down the slide and swing on the swings. Some children may ride tricycles, while others play tag or simply run around. Structured physical activity, in contrast, is planned by teachers, with specific goals in mind. Teaching children the correct way to perform motor skills such as jumping and hopping is an example of an appropriate goal. And, because motor skills must be taught in early childhood, just as are emerging reading and writing skills and understandings, it is not only an appropriate goal but an important one.

The key word in NASPE's guidelines is *accumulate*. No longer is it considered necessary to perform thirty minutes of uninterrupted aerobic activity to achieve benefits. Rather, new recommendations from such groups as the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, NASPE, and the American Heart Association recommend ten- to fifteen-minute "bouts" of at least moderate-intensity physical activity, adding up to thirty minutes, on most or all days of the week.

To promote physical fitness among young children, early childhood professionals should concentrate on health-related fitness, which includes cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition.

Cardiovascular endurance is the ability of the heart and lungs to supply oxygen to the muscles. Someone with great cardiovascular endurance has a strong heart—a heart that is larger and pumps more blood per beat than the heart of an individual

who is not fit. Good cardiovascular endurance results when an individual exercises regularly. Typically, aerobic exercise improves cardiovascular fitness. However, aerobic exercise cannot be approached in the same manner in which it is for adults.

Young children, particularly before the age of six, are not ready for long, uninterrupted periods of strenuous activity. Expecting them to perform organized exercises for thirty continuous minutes, as an adult does, is not only unrealistic but also could be physically damaging and could instill an intense dislike of physical activity.

Developmentally appropriate aerobic activities for children include moderate to vigorous play and movement. Moderately intense physical activity, like walking, increases the heart rate and breathing somewhat; vigorously intense movement, like pretending to be an Olympic sprinter, takes more effort and results in a noticeable increase in breathing. Playing tag, marching, riding a tricycle, dancing to moderate- to fast-paced music, and jumping rope are other forms of moderate- to vigorous-intensity exercise for children.

Muscular strength relates to the ability to exert force with a single maximum effort. Muscular endurance is about stamina. Because the two are related, many of the same kinds of activities and exercises benefit both. To build them, children should use their own weight in physical activities like jumping, playing tug-of-war, and pumping higher and higher on a swing.

Flexibility involves the range of motion around joints. When people possess good flexibility, they can bend and stretch without effort or aches and pains, and take part in physical activities without fear of muscle strain, sprain, or spasm. In general, girls tend to be more flexible than boys, who start to lose their flexibility at around age 10. Girls begin to lose flexibility at twelve. However, this doesn't have to happen. If children are physically active, they will remain flexible. They should also be encouraged to work specifically on their flexibility through gentle, static stretches that take a muscle just beyond its usual length (without pain) and are held for at least ten seconds. Such activities as pretending to stretch to climb a ladder, put something on a high shelf, or shoot a basketball through a hoop, or bend to tie shoes, pick flowers, or pet a cat—as well as hanging and swinging from monkey bars—contribute to increased flexibility. Children should work their own limbs through their range of motion, and should be warned against ballistic (bouncing) stretching, as it can cause small tears in the muscle fibers and is not as effective as static stretching.

Body composition, the final component of health-related fitness, relates to the body's makeup in terms of fat, muscle, tissue, and bone or the percentage of lean body tissue to fat. Due to the burgeoning childhood obesity crisis, much attention is currently being focused on body composition. However, weight alone is not a good indicator of body composition. Some children are simply large-boned. Also, muscle weighs more than fat. So it is possible for two children to have the same weight but very different makeups, one possessing very little fat and the other too much. Physical activity, and particularly aerobic and muscle-strengthening movement, is the key to combating body fat.

Given the increasing emphasis in early childhood programs on accountability and academics, physical activity is in danger of being eliminated from the early

childhood curriculum. Many early childhood professionals admit they have trouble fitting movement and other components of a physical development curriculum into the program because they are too busy preparing children for academic expectations. Indeed, physical education classes and even recess are currently being eliminated from elementary schools in favor of more “academic time.” However, academics and physical activity are not mutually exclusive. Researchers have found that regular physical activity contributes to improved school performance. For example, in one study, 500 Canadian students spent an extra hour a day in physical education classes and performed better on tests than children who were less active (Hannaford, 1995). A neurophysiologist, Hannaford states that because movement activates the neural wiring throughout the body, the whole body, and not just the brain, is an instrument of learning. Moreover, brain research has shown us that the mind and body are not separate entities—that the functions of the body contribute to the functions of the mind (Jensen, 2000).

A curriculum for physical development can also contribute to other curriculum goals in early childhood. For example, when children have opportunities to get into high, low, wide, and narrow shapes, they increase their flexibility (one of the five fitness factors). They also learn about **mathematics** and art because these are quantitative ideas (math), and shape is both an art and a mathematics concept. If they practice these shapes with partners, the concept of cooperation, a social studies skill, is added. When children jump like rabbits and kangaroos, they develop muscular strength and endurance and, depending on how continuously they jump, cardiovascular endurance. They explore the concepts of light/heavy, big/small, up/down, and high/low. These are also quantitative math concepts, but physically experiencing and then expressing them enhances language development as well as word comprehension, which contributes to emergent **literacy**.

Regardless of the content area or concept being explored, there is a way for children to experience it physically. Doing so benefits children because they learn best by being actively engaged, and this also promotes physical fitness. Early childhood teachers, therefore, should frequently employ movement across the curriculum. They can also use transitions to promote fitness. Children move from one activity to another during transitions, so they may as well move in ways that are both functional and fun. Flexibility is promoted when children move in tall, straight, or crooked shapes; when tiptoeing; or when moving on three body parts. Muscular strength, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular endurance are enhanced when children hop, skip, or jog lightly.

To further encourage children’s active movement, early childhood professionals should arrange the environment to allow for movement, ensuring there is room both indoors and outdoors for physical activity. They should buy classroom and **playground** equipment and props with movement in mind, choosing items like parachutes, plastic hoops, jump ropes, juggling scarves, ribbon sticks, and balls in a variety of shapes, sizes, and textures. Because children learn by watching the important adults in their lives, early childhood professionals can demonstrate enthusiasm for physical activity, giving the children role models and helping them form positive associations with movement. Finally, recognizing why physical activity is necessary promotes a positive attitude toward fitness that will endure beyond childhood. Children should understand why they’re being given opportunities

to chase bubbles, dance, and pretend to jump like rabbits and kangaroos. They should also have a voice in deciding what physical activity they take part in, as choice is a necessary ingredient in fostering intrinsic motivation; and intrinsic motivation is a contributing factor in ensuring lifelong fitness.

Most people believe children automatically acquire motor skills as their bodies develop—that it is a natural, “magical” process that occurs along with maturation. However, maturation influences only part of the process, allowing a child to execute most movement skills at an immature level. A child whose skill stays at an immature level will lack confidence in her movement abilities and is unlikely to take part in physical activities beyond childhood. The likely end result is an individual who is not physically fit.

The notion of leaving cognitive or social/emotional development to chance is unacceptable. So, too, is the idea that all we need to do is let children play and they will be prepared for all the physical challenges life brings their way. Therefore, just as other skills are taught in early childhood, so too must movement skills have a place in the curriculum. By teaching movement skills and helping children to be more physically active, early childhood professionals can help combat the obesity crisis and promote lifelong physical fitness. *See also* Child Art; Classroom Environments; Development Cognitive; Development, Emotional; Development, Language; Development, Social; Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s); Maturationism.

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Rae Pica

Curriculum, Science

Science education is an essential component of the early childhood curriculum because it satisfies children’s desire to learn about the everyday world and allows them an opportunity to exercise and further develop their cognitive skills. Young children’s high level of engagement in science activities also provides a context within which the early childhood teacher can introduce opportunities for learning other things such as language and early literacy skills.

Science is a cultural and social construct. Ways of referring to science include scientific thinking, scientific facts, the scientific method, and science processes. The goals of science education can include acquiring a body of information,

understanding the scientific method as a system of sustained and systematic inquiry, active participation in this form of inquiry, developing the cognitive processes used in doing science, and learning to apply scientific understanding to everyday life experiences.

In the United States, science education has typically involved a transmission model whereby the teacher delivered a prescribed body of information to sitting, listening, and perhaps note-taking students who would later be tested on their acquisition and retention of the information. Recent reform efforts in science education have challenged this traditional approach. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (1993) and the National Research Council (1996) concur that science education should focus less on science as a body of facts to be mastered and more on science as a way of thinking and trying to understand the world. Thus, reform in science education calls for students to be involved in the experiences of science inquiry from the very beginning of their education.

The science curriculum within early childhood settings is consistent with many of these recommendations and has a long tradition of what is often called “hand-on” or active engagement. Principles of exploration, manipulation, and hypothesis testing have been seen as vital and natural to young children’s science learning. Indeed, Piagetian scholars frequently evoke his image of children as “young scientists.”

A reform perspective for science education builds on young children’s strengths and these traditions. For the most part, children younger than five years depend on their personal experiences as the basis for learning. Although they are actively acquiring language, they are not yet skilled in taking in information through linguistic input alone. Thus, if science is conceived of as a body of knowledge to be transmitted linguistically, it is not suitable for the early childhood classroom. If, on the other hand, science is conceived of as a process of investigating and understanding the natural world, then it is an ideal match for the early childhood classroom because young children continually and actively make meaning of their everyday experiences in their physical and sociocultural environments. Language supplements this experientially based learning. Children use linguistic input from others to assist them in understanding and interpreting their experience and they actively use language to express their understandings and to ask questions that will help them interpret their experiences.

The Components of a Science Curriculum

“Science education” implies moving beyond the young child’s natural processes of learning about the everyday world to undertake systematic and sustained inquiry into phenomena of the natural world. This can lead to three somewhat distinguishable developments that must be considered in designing a science curriculum: content knowledge, a “script” for scientific inquiry, and basic cognitive skills.

Content knowledge. Any aspect of the natural world that can be made accessible to the young child can become the content for science education. Young children’s reliance on personal experience as the foundation for learning argues for a focus

on phenomena that can be perceived by the child—for example, exploring the characteristics of water would be more feasible and appropriate at the early childhood level than would exploring the combination of molecules or the processes of climate change.

Whatever the domain, it is important that it be introduced to children in a structured manner that allows them to build a basic cognitive representation (mental structure) that can form the basis for further learning. Once children have learned, for example, the essential differences between living and nonliving things, that knowledge will influence what they notice and thus what they learn from future experiences. Whatever the domain, it is also important that children be provided with the appropriate tools, including vocabulary to describe their new concepts. Preschoolers who have carried out investigations shining a flashlight at plastic wrap, wax paper, and cardboard have developed some concepts about whether and how light moves through objects. In many cases, if the teacher uses the terms *transparent*, *translucent*, and *opaque*, the children will spontaneously hear and understand and learn these words and then appropriately extend them to other contexts. Children may also use other forms of representation—such as the graphic representations found in **Reggio Emilia** classrooms—to examine and share their understandings.

Depth and breadth are also important considerations in determining the content of science education. Any topic (e.g., the life cycle, mixing colors) that can be studied at the preschool level is probably sufficiently complex that it can also be studied at the college or graduate level. The topic must be approached at a **developmentally appropriate** level that honors preschoolers' general level of world knowledge and cognitive limitations, yet it should be approached in a way that allows the child to develop a rich and interconnected knowledge base. For example, instead of studying the life cycle of only humans or only green beans, the preschooler could be introduced to the life cycles of several animals and several plants, then helped to describe the similarities and differences in the life cycle of plants and animals. When children have a rich knowledge base, they are better able to engage in higher order cognitive processes such as drawing inferences or drawing analogies. A rich knowledge base also contributes to listening and reading comprehension.

Scientific inquiry. There are methods of inquiry that set science apart from other disciplines. These methods are designed to construct an accurate (e.g., reliable, consistent, and nonarbitrary) representation of natural phenomena and to support or disconfirm explanatory theories. Young children will not use the same methods that adult scientists use, yet science education for young children nevertheless presupposes a systematic process of inquiry. *Benchmarks for Scientific Inquiry* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1993) suggests that children K-2¹ acquire understandings such as the following:

- People can often learn about the things around them by just observing those things carefully, but sometimes they can learn more by doing something to the things and noting what happens (p. 10).
- Describing things as accurately as possible is important in science because it enables people to compare their observations with those of others (p. 10).

- When a science investigation is done the way it was done before, we expect to get a very similar result (p. 6).
- Science investigations generally work the same way in different places (p. 6).

There is a consensus among those who focus on science education at the preschool level that it should involve extended investigation within a domain, that it should be hands-on, and that children should be encouraged to ask questions, seek answers, make careful observations, document their findings, and use those findings as the basis for further investigations.

Probably the most explicit guidelines for science inquiry at the preschool level are provided by the *ScienceStart!* curriculum (e.g., Conezio and French, 2003). Teachers using this curriculum to support children in carrying out a science activity each day, following a four-step process described as “Ask and Reflect,” “Plan and Predict,” “Act and Observe,” and “Report and Reflect.” While it is expected that the teachers will initially be primarily responsible for implementing these steps, the goal is that preschoolers will gradually internalize and increase their level of participation in this science cycle.

Basic cognitive skills. The early childhood years are a time of rapid development and expansion of basic cognitive skills such as classifying and sequencing. Although developmental psychologists generally believe that these skills develop naturally as the child interacts with the environment, it is also recognized that their development can be enhanced by enriching the child’s environment and deliberately providing opportunities for the child to actively use the skills in the service of personally meaningful goals. Conversely, children who are in home and **classroom environments** that provide limited opportunities to use the skills can be assumed to have less experience and thus less expertise in using them.

The basic cognitive skills that are developing during the preschool years are applicable across a variety of domains and are in no way restricted to science inquiries. However, science draws on many of the skills and science education therefore provides an excellent opportunity to foster their development in the young child. The table below shows some of the skills that are developing during the early childhood years along with questions that a teacher might ask to support their use and development.

<i>Cognitive/Science Processes that Develop During the Early Childhood Years</i>	<i>Questions That Can Be Asked During Science Education to Support the Use and Further Development of the Processes</i>
Observing	What do you see here? What just happened?
Comparing	How are these alike? How are they different?
Classifying	Can you put pictures of plants in the first column and pictures of animals in the second column?
Measuring	Can you cut a piece of yarn as long as your jump? Where should it start and end?
Sequencing	Here are pictures of the three bears from the story—can you line them up so the tallest is in the front and the shortest is in the back?
Quantifying	If we have three bears, how many bowls of porridge do we need?

<i>Cognitive/Science Processes that Develop During the Early Childhood Years</i>	<i>Questions That Can Be Asked During Science Education to Support the Use and Further Development of the Processes</i>
Representing data	You each have a picture of a red apple, a green apple, and a yellow apple. And you each have three bites of apple. Taste the different colored apples, then put the picture of your favorite on the tree.
Interpreting representations	Let's look at how people voted for their favorite kind of apple. Which color was the most popular? Which color was the least popular?
Planning	If we want to find out what is our favorite flavor of ice cream, out of chocolate, vanilla and strawberry, what do we need to do?
Predicting	OK, before you taste the ice cream, what do you predict you will like best?
Replicating	If we mix yellow and blue again tomorrow, will we get green again, or could we get a different color?
Reporting	If someone looked at this chart, what would they say was the month with the most birthdays? How could we write that in a sentence?
Defining and controlling variables	So we know now that if we mix yellow and blue food coloring, we get green. What if we mix two drops of blue with one drop of yellow—will that be the same green as if we mix two drops of yellow with one drop of blue?

Developmental psychologists and classroom teachers continue to **document** young children's here-to-fore unrecognized cognitive competencies. However, competence is a complex construct that involves many different components. The younger child's competence is often "fragile" in that it may appear only in a single or very limited range of situations. Expanded opportunities to use a particular skill can increase the flexibility with which it may be used in a variety of situations. For example, the child who is regularly offered opportunities to classify a variety of different sorts of materials and who is talked with regularly about this activity will more rapidly develop stronger and/or more flexible classification skills than the child with limited exposure to activities that involve classification.

Science Activities as a Context for Language and Literacy Development

Language development and early **literacy** development are now a, if not *the*, primary focus of early childhood education throughout the preschool and primary grades. State and federal education agencies are particularly concerned that too many children are entering kindergarten without the foundation in language and literacy needed to support their learning to read. How does science education in early childhood fit in with this emphasis on language and literacy development? Is there really time to include science education in the early childhood curriculum? In fact, science education in early childhood classrooms can provide an ideal context for the development of language and literacy skills.

Language and literacy must be *about* something. Contemporary research on learning has indicated that children learn best when they are engaged in personally

meaningful, goal-directed activities. Because of young children's preparedness to learn about the everyday world, they readily engage in hands-on science investigations. The teacher can capitalize on this engagement by embedding language and literacy activities within the science investigations.

The books teachers select to read aloud can be related to the science activities and can provide the basis for the reflecting and developing questions to investigate (for example, after reading *Mouse Paint* aloud, a teacher might invite her students to think about what would happen if they mixed paint themselves). There are many nonfiction books available at the early childhood level that teachers and children can consult as they carry out investigations. For example, they could consult several books on the life-cycle of butterflies when hatching butterflies.

Young children can be encouraged to use writing and other forms of graphic representation to record and analyze their data during science activities. Contributing to making classroom books and charts to demonstrate their findings offers children an authentic opportunity to use their own experiences as the basis for literacy materials they are creating for others. Such writing provides children with meaningful ways to extend their understanding of the alphabetic principle, concepts of print, and writing with an audience in mind.

Language development is enhanced at both the receptive and expressive levels as young children listen to the teacher talk about ongoing science activities and then appropriate some of that language to use as they describe their own activities. Science itself has a specialized vocabulary (tools, prediction, explanation) and the concepts that children acquire in the course of carrying out science activities lead naturally to the acquisition of new vocabulary to describe those concepts (assuming the teacher models the appropriate vocabulary). Science also provides an opportunity for teachers and children to exchange "information-bearing" language as they describe observations, formulate plans, ask questions, and offer explanations. Information bearing language differs from the use of language for behavior management and social exchanges that typically occur in the early childhood classroom and it helps children develop the speaking and listening skills they will need once they enter a formal academic setting.

Resources for Teachers

There are commercially available curricula for teaching science at the kindergarten level and beyond. For the most part, teachers who want to teach science at the preschool level have created their own lesson plans. New materials are being developed, thanks to funding from the National Science Foundation, including The *Young Scientist* series and *ScienceStart!* (see Conezio and French, 2003). There are also a number of reference books available that compile science activities. However, teachers should be cautious in using these activities because they often are teacher demonstrations (rather than hands-on activities) that are not contextualized in terms of an ongoing topic of inquiry and may not be scientifically accurate. One popular activity of this type is arranging a cone over the mouth of a bottle to represent a volcano, then putting baking soda and vinegar into the bottle to create an "eruption" of the volcano—this demonstration does not accurately represent the process of volcanic eruption nor lead to an

investigation how the combination of a liquid and a solid could lead to the creation of a gas. It is entertaining, but it is not science.

Summary

Reform efforts are transforming science education from a verbal transmission model to a hands-on inquiry model. This transformation is ideal for young children, who are eager to learn about the everyday world. Young children engage readily in hands-on investigations of natural phenomena. With adult guidance, they are able to engage in systematic and sustained inquiry that leads to the acquisition of a rich scientific knowledge base, the expansion of emerging cognitive skills, and the development of other valuable skills, including language and early literacy.

Note

1. *Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1993) describes goals for students' achievement of scientific literacy at various grade spans, beginning at kindergarten through second grade. Many of these goals for grades K-2 are also appropriate for children ranging from three to five, the preschool years.

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Lucia French

Curriculum, Social

A *social curriculum* in early childhood education consists of all the things that educators intentionally do to support young children's social learning and development. While every child gains the core of his or her social learning in the family or home setting, nevertheless educators have something important to add. Especially in our complex world today, educators can be key supporters to the family in fostering social development and helping children learn to take their first steps in functioning outside the home and beginning to participate in a diverse society.

Implementing a social curriculum has two main components. The first part involves *creating a learning environment* that promotes a sense of caring and belonging. **Grouping** practices, for example, set the stage for what kind of community can evolve within the classroom. The second part involves the *active teaching of those social skills, concepts, and knowledge* that children need to interact competently with peers and adults and to understand and navigate their social world.

Implementing the social curriculum is closely related to promoting emotional development, but nevertheless, a distinction can be made. Although it also possible to merge social and emotional education into one "social-emotional" domain, the emotional curriculum focuses on helping children develop and maintain healthy attachments to parents and caregivers, trust the security of their environment, understand their own and others' emotions, and gain skills such as empathy, emotional regulation and expression, and kindness and caring. In contrast, the social curriculum builds on those emotional foundations and assists children in getting along with others (*gain social skills*) and learning to understand the rules, roles, relations, and institutions of society (*acquire social/moral knowledge*).

The Social Environment

Research has shown a consistent link between high-quality early childhood environments and positive social and academic outcomes for children. Teachers can foster social development through setting up environments that promote social interaction, dramatic play, sharing, cooperation, and awareness of diversity. In addition, they can forge a caring classroom that communicates respect for others (Stone, 2003) and democratic decision making (Vance and Weaver, 2003). Educators can also dramatically influence classroom social dynamics through grouping practices. Three approaches to arranging the composition of children have received the most attention: mixed-age grouping, looping, and inclusion. Each approach presents different opportunities for children's social learning by providing different relationships with adults and peers.

In **mixed-age grouping**, a classroom is organized to contain children that span two or more years of age. The wider span of ages requires teachers to plan in a more individualized way and create a more differentiated approach to instruction. Studies have shown that multiage grouping allows for more cooperation (less competition), peer modeling and teaching, and increased development of responsibility and perspective taking skills, and that it has beneficial academic and social outcomes for children (Katz, Evangelou, and Hartman, 1990). Findings are particularly strong for low-income children who show benefits in achievement,

social development, self-concept ratings, and more positive attitudes toward school when in multiage as opposed to age-segregated settings. Multiage grouping has been used successfully in public schools, preschools, and child-care programs (where it is sometimes called “family grouping”), and is fundamental to the Montessori method, which uses three-year age groupings (under ages 3, 3–6, 6–9, and 9–12).

In looping, a group of children keep their same teacher(s) over a span of years. In the United States, this practice is not widespread but has existed since 1913 under different names: teacher rotation, family-style learning, student-teacher progression, and multiyear instruction. Looping is the norm in many European countries, such as Norway and **Italy**, where the teacher remains with her classroom throughout the entire five or six years of elementary school; and it is also fundamental to the **Waldorf** method. The belief is that teachers thereby know students better and are able to individualize and provide appropriate instruction as well as use more positive approaches to discipline. Looping also saves instructional time because the routines and orientation established in the first year continues in subsequent years but also has social benefits, allowing children more time to develop relationships with teachers and peers. Parents and teachers too develop stronger working relationships that allow them to send consistent expectations to children about the importance of schooling and behavior. Children and parents who need more time to develop connections to school can do so.

Inclusion refers to integrating children with disabilities into the daily life, routines, and social interactions of their natural environments and is conceptualized as a benefit to all children. Social integration in inclusive classrooms tends not to occur unless teacher support is provided, but when teachers are trained and supported, then **young children with disabilities** show more interaction and higher levels of play in inclusive classes as opposed to segregated ones. Typically developing children can become more accepting of human differences, more aware of other children’s needs, and more comfortable around children with disabilities. To promote integration, teachers need to coach children in the skills of entering and sustaining play, sharing meaning, attending to verbal and nonverbal cues, and appreciating their similarities and differences—skills that will serve them well the rest of their lives (Diamond and Stacey, 2003).

Teaching Social Skills, Concepts, and Knowledge

A quality early childhood program promotes young children’s capacity to learn in a social setting by helping them learn to engage in strong, positive interactions with both adults and peers. Individual differences in children’s social competence are readily apparent in groups of young children, and unless these are addressed, children’s academic and learning outcomes cannot be maximized. All young children, in particular those from stressful and nonnurturing environments, benefit from a proactive social curriculum.

Dramatic and imaginative play provides children with the best opportunities to learn to notice and appreciate other children’s points of view. Ideas and materials have to be negotiated and agreed upon and problems solved as conflicts arise. By encouraging and monitoring children’s social play and intervening in a supportive way when necessary, teachers can help young children learn to use words, take

turns, lead and follow, and control aggression. To avoid inadvertently widening the gap between different children's social knowledge and skills, teachers must create alternative learning situations for children to practice skills. "Floor time" (Greenspan, 2002) with a trusted adult or peer allows children to become more confident in play. For a child who has particular difficulties with social play, the following are some positive ways to intervene (Landy, 2002, p. 294):

- coach the child in words to use in a situation,
- help the child see the connection between his action and the other child's responses,
- suggest some ways for the child to enter the group and join the play,
- coach the child to respond to other's invitations,
- coach the child to learn and use others' names,
- show the child how to join the flow of the play so as not to disrupt it,
- encourage a rejected child to try again.

Children can also be taught the skills of social problem solving so that they are better able to negotiate, take turns, and solve problems verbally rather than physically. Through direct instruction, stories and formal and informal conversations, teachers can talk about consequences, explain tasks, talk about the sequence of events, and ask questions that help children consider alternatives. In this way, they teach and model the components of social problem solving that become internalized into private speech. Some children, particularly those who have difficulties with attention or impulse control, need intensive support in learning and practicing these skills through such techniques as role-play and structured discussion.

Children demonstrate social skills with adults when they seek information, help, permission and attention in appropriate ways; listen and follow directions; converse, show, and share. The social curriculum includes instruction and guidance in appropriately and consistently using adults as resources.

Education for Social/Moral Knowledge

In primary school, the study of people is called *social studies* and involves looking at how people live and work, now and in past times, how their families and societies are organized, and how people are shaped by their everyday contexts. In preschool, teachers implement the equivalent when they provide experiences, activities, and materials that foster learning about the social world and its organization. When teachers go beyond those basics to teach about rules and conventions, fairness, authority, and welfare, they are enriching the **social studies curriculum** to include a moral domain.

There are many ways for teachers to create topics or themes and sequence their curriculum to help children master social/moral knowledge; different formal curricula offer alternative approaches. For example, the early childhood program known as **Creative Curriculum** organizes the components of "social studies" for preschool children into the four categories: spaces and geography, people and how they live, people and the environment, and people and the past (Dodge, Colker, and Heroman, 2002). These four topics roughly correspond to what, in later grades, will come to be called geography, sociology, ecology, and history. Through these studies, children delve into familiar topics in many preschool and child-care programs, such as their community, maps, families, jobs, school

and home rules, caring for the environment, and growth and change over time. The **Montessori** primary level for children aged 3–6 includes a broad “Cultural Curriculum” with many subtopics, including the study of people and cultures in other countries, music, art, world geography, plants, animals, and the solar system. Montessori students always start with the biggest question and the widest scope before moving to more specific questions and topics. They learn about the whole earth before learning about the continents, and then the countries. This approach is intended to teach them to respect other living beings and the earth and to feel connected to the global human family.

A range of approaches to a Social Curriculum can be found in the early learning standards formulated across the United States in recent years in response to federal policies such as the **Head Start** Child Outcome Framework and the **Good Start, Grow Smart** requirements. A comprehensive content analysis of state early learning standards, drawing from the **National Education Goals Panel’s** five dimensions of school **readiness**, categories the curriculum contents into four parts:

- *Physical*—knowledge about the specific properties, characteristics, and facts related to the physical world;
- *Logico-mathematical*—knowledge about mathematics or high-order thinking about relationships, such as same/different, cause and effect, part/whole;
- *Social*—knowledge about roles of persons or groups within society;
- *Social-conventional*—knowledge about the conventions and moral rules of society, the home, classroom, or school.

This analysis revealed that state early learning standards put much less emphasis on the two kinds of social knowledge standards than on either the physical or logico-mathematical areas of knowledge (Scott-Little, Kagan, and Frelow, 2005).

Most early childhood educators believe that young children have intense interests in social and moral knowledge, and that teachers should respond by encouraging them to ask questions, dialogue with others, and think about the reasons underlying social and moral ideas. When teachers approach the teaching and learning of social/moral knowledge in an inquiry-oriented way, children are exposed to rich factual and conceptual information that they can use to construct their own knowledge. In this way, children’s thinking grows increasingly abstract and complex with age. For example, young children are interested in the following social and moral concepts that can be featured in the curriculum through books, role plays, dramatic play materials, field trips, and class speakers, which draw attention to the following:

- age categories and relationships,
- gender,
- race (skin color),
- families and kinship,
- friendship,
- ownership and bosses,
- money, buying, and selling,
- social conventions—good manners,
- morality—justice and fairness,
- morality—respect and authority.

In all of these areas, young children at first have simple and concrete ideas about them that may contain “mistakes” by adult standards (“a brother is someone who

wears pants with pockets,” “I’m a girl, but when I’m four, I’ll be a boy”) (Edwards, 1986; Edwards, Logue, and Russell, 1983). Children’s early social concepts and moral knowledge represent their best approximation of adult knowledge. When adults listen carefully to a child’s point of view, encourage discussion, answer questions, and provide stimulating books, social encounters, activities, and thinking games, they can strengthen the child’s identification with adults, elicit willing cooperation, and stimulate young children to gradually re-structure their social and moral thinking toward greater maturity.

In summary, teachers support social learning through a social curriculum that includes opportunities for children to do the following:

- learn from each other through play and problem solving,
- model the language and social skills of more competent peers and trusted adults,
- question, discuss, and receive age-appropriate information about the social and moral issues and categories that most concern them,
- participate in setting fair and understandable classroom rules,
- regroup from their mistakes and have enough time and opportunity to practice their emerging skills, and
- master the social skills, concepts, and knowledge that they need to fully participate through multiple pathways.

See also Curriculum, Emotional Development; Development, Emotional; Development, Social.

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Carolyn Pope Edwards and Mary Ellin Logue

Curriculum, Social Studies

Currently, social studies are defined as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities with the end goal of promoting civic competence. As an integrated field, social studies involve a myriad of processes and content. The

social studies include concepts drawn from anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, sociology, and many other subject matter areas. While it may seem overwhelming to ask young children to gain all the knowledge and skills implied in this definition, the major goal of today's social studies is to introduce children to the skills, attitudes, and knowledge required of the citizens of a democracy.

There have been a variety of approaches to teaching social studies content and skills to young children over the long history of early childhood education in the United States. Before the 1930s, children memorized facts about history and geography with no thought of relating these facts to the everyday world of the child. In the 1920s and 1930s, theorists and teachers emphasized the social skills of cooperation, sharing, and negotiating, but too often the curriculum was turned into a training program that ignored the complexities of social studies content. The holiday curriculum, still implemented in many schools and sometimes described as a "tourist curriculum," gives children a brief glimpse into some selected cultures. This approach to the social studies also frequently introduces stereotypic and simplistic concepts of these cultures and their beliefs. Children experience a few activities, foods, and clothing and then move on to the next holiday.

Beginning in the 1930s, the emphasis in the social studies curriculum began to shift to a more child-centered and democratic **pedagogy** that emphasized children's firsthand experiences within the community of the classroom. Progressive educators, such as John Dewey (1944), emphasized both teaching activities that began with children's daily life experiences and the democratic classroom where children participated in decision making and rule setting. In the early 1960s, Jerome Bruner inspired further changes in the social studies curriculum when he advanced the belief that curriculum content should emphasize the structure of a discipline. Many early childhood educators adopted two of Bruner's (1960) basic ideas: (1) introduce the key concepts of a given discipline to children on a developmentally appropriate level; and (2) use inquiry-based teaching strategies to facilitate children's concept acquisition.

Since the 1960s and the Civil Rights Movement, the social studies curricula has expanded to include a strong emphasis on multifaceted, **antibias and multicultural** learning and experiences, akin to a social justice pedagogy. One of the central foci for teachers of this form of social studies curriculum is to create conditions through which children learn to value and respect diversity. Such a curriculum goal is not easy and requires that teachers examine their own values prior to creating experiences for children.

An antibias classroom actively challenges prejudice, stereotyping, bias, and negative decisions made about persons on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, gender, and ability. It introduces children to different family types, religious beliefs, and ways of living. This focus goes far beyond that of introducing children to cultures removed from their everyday experiences; rather, it invites children to explore and respect the diversity of life styles represented in their own neighborhoods and the larger multicultural society. These goals require that teachers also acknowledge the need for children's families to be involved in negotiating an early childhood curriculum.

Contemporary perspectives on social studies curriculum require teachers to make choices about strategy and subject matter as they plan children's

experiences. Many of these experiences draw upon ten general themes identified in 1994 by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) for kindergarten and the elementary school. From within this framework, teachers of children in preschool programs may easily create experiences that are developmentally appropriate for their classrooms.

- *Culture.* The study of culture—the art, language, history, and geography of different people—takes place across the total curriculum. To become a citizen of today’s global community, children must be exposed early to the universals of human cultures and the ways in which they differ. The teacher of four-year-olds might, for example, display depictions of children by artists from two cultures, and have the children compare color, media, and use of line. Then the children might discuss the artists’ diverse interpretations of children. Using the methods of the social sciences, data about diverse cultures and various ‘images of the child’ could be gathered and presented for discussion.
- *Time, continuity, and change.* Young children should be supported to understand themselves in terms of the passage of time, and to develop the rudimentary skills of the historian. For example, three-year-olds can ask their parents about their physical characteristics as infants; and they can collect images of themselves when they were younger and compare this data with their current lives.
- *People, places, and environments.* Young children are generally eager to learn how to locate themselves in space, to become familiar with landforms in their environment, and to develop a beginning understanding of the human–environment interaction. Four-year-olds, for example, could make maps of their school using blocks and other manipulatives; as well as through other forms of symbolic representation.
- *Individual development and identity.* Children can learn to identify the various forces that shape their identity. How people learn, what they believe, and how people meet their basic needs in the context of culture are part of this theme. The teacher might read a book about an Asian child and help the children to compare that child’s beliefs with their own, or share a book such as *My Grandfather’s Journey* to illustrate the mixed emotions involved in immigration and acculturation.
- *Individuals, groups, and institutions.* Children have already developed beginning concepts of the role of such institutions as schools and families in their lives. A good teacher builds upon these understandings and forges a strong home–school connection. There are many possibilities for gathering data on families and integrating them into the curriculum. Similarly, five-year-olds might investigate the roles and responsibilities of the persons who work in their school. Findings could be displayed in a class book or other representational forms.
- *Power, authority, and governance.* The emphasis is on beginning experiences in how communities structure themselves to function. Preschool children can make choices about which areas of the classroom they will spend time in during the “free choice” part of the day. When conflict occurs, they will learn to negotiate a solution with the help of the teacher. Young children are also capable of helping to establish rules regarding areas of fairness and safety.
- *Production, distribution, and consumption.* At the basic level, children grasp economic concepts such as labor, wants and needs, and goods and services. The creation of a grocery store in the dramatic play area, the selling of tickets to a puppet show are just two of the many ways in which teachers can help children experience economics in action.

- *Science, technology, and society.* With this curriculum focus, children are introduced to changes in technology, and invited to explore such questions as: “What changes does technology bring to our lives today?” They can also be invited to imagine such changes, for example, how the environment might look if we did not rely on the automobile to get from place to place. Children can become creative environmentalists when asked “What will be the eventual result if we use cars more instead of less?”
- *Global connections.* This curriculum focus is contrary to the views of many parents and teachers of young children, because it advises that children be introduced to topics of great importance in our global society. Some believe that young children cannot comprehend such issues as the global environment, human rights, and economic interdependence. However, with the careful supervision of the teacher, five-year-olds may forge cross-cultural connections, for example, through e-mail and letter writing. They can then ask and answer questions with their peers from other countries.
- *Civic ideals and practices.* Through this theme, children meet the central purpose of the social studies—full participation in a democratic society. According to Seefeldt (2001), more than ever before, children need opportunities to acquire knowledge about what it means to be a citizen; and to gain a basic understanding of the principles of freedom. Without such knowledge, children are ill prepared to assume responsible citizenship in the future and to support freedom wherever it exists or emerges around the world. The early childhood classroom can be an ideal setting in which children gain these dispositions and understandings. “A necessary condition of freedom is the ability to think and make decisions. Decision making is fostered throughout the day, not just at activity center time” (Seefeldt, 1993, p. 7). Each of the ten themes guides teachers in selecting or deriving content based on children’s interests, previous experiences, developmental stages, and skills (Minde, 2005, p. 14). These social studies themes also include a focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values.

Social Studies Planning and Teaching

Using teaching strategies based on the work of Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky, teachers assist children in constructing their own knowledge through firsthand, meaningful encounters with the environment and with other children and adults. Vygotsky (1978) saw children learning to think and behave in ways that reflect their community’s culture by mastering challenging tasks in collaboration with more knowledgeable members of their society. Teachers provide the raw materials for integrated thematic units where children employ the techniques of the social sciences such as gathering, analyzing, discussing, and presenting data. The emphasis is on inquiry and employing problem-solving skills to learn content.

Living in a democracy requires that young children begin the process of building connections to their immediate social group (their peers in the classroom), their school, their neighborhood, and eventually the broader community. According to Dewey (1944, p. 192), “A curriculum that acknowledges the social responsibilities of education must present situations where problems are relevant to the problems of living together, and where observation and information are calculated to develop social insight and interest.” Within the small democracy of the

preschool or primary classroom, teachers provide children with opportunities to practice respect for the rights of others, promote the common good, participate in making choices and developing class rules, and develop a firm sense of identity and self-efficacy. Key social skills that might result from such social studies experiences include learning how to interact effectively with others, express one's own feelings and empathize and take the perspective of others, develop effective strategies for making and keeping friends, and resolve conflicts effectively. In this sense, a social studies curriculum is similar to a **Social Curriculum**, or a curriculum for social development.

Many early childhood educators believe that a focus on knowledge and skills as they support children's responsible engagement with each other leads to the development of positive attitudes and values. For example, when teachers encourage a group of young children to "adopt" a stream or a playground, children can learn about those spaces; they can also gain a much-needed sense of responsibility and participation in their community. Additional ways to introduce young children to the principles of community responsibility and caring include learning the habits of recycling, visits to a veterinary clinic, carefully facilitated intergenerational contacts, and opportunities to mentor and interact with classmates who have special needs.

In summary, the social studies have evolved from rote learning of facts to a complex marriage of content and process. Today's social studies are based on much more than current theories about how children learn and the wisdom of experts in the content areas. They are also based on beliefs that John Dewey expressed long ago when he described schools as sources for societal change. Of all the content areas in the early childhood curriculum, the social studies curriculum is perhaps the most essential to the changing needs of an increasingly globalized world. As the center of the early childhood curricula, the social studies integrate the disciplines through meaningful age appropriate, hands-on, inquiry-based thematic units, projects and investigations with the end goal of preparing young children to fulfill their role as citizens of a democratic society. "The youngest among us are not expected to assume responsibility for nurturing freedom throughout the world, but the conditions that will enable each to contribute to freedom must be present from the beginning of their educational experiences and continue throughout the course of their schooling" (Seefeldt, 1993, p. 4). *See also* Curriculum, Social Studies; Development, Language; Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education; Pedagogy, Social Justice/Equity; Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education; Symbolic Languages.

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Alice Galper

Curriculum, Technology

People talk of a “technology curriculum” for young children in at least three ways. First, some refer to instruction in “design technology”—an approach involving teaching children as young as kindergartners about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concepts as they design and build things. A second interpretation is that of a technology-*enhanced* curriculum in any subject matter area or combination of areas. A third interpretation refers to a set of ideas or materials for instruction *about* electronic or other technologies, such as teaching children about digital photography, video, or computers. The three meanings vary in their educational goals and approaches, with each making contributions to early childhood education.

“Design technology” can refer to a broad range of curricula that vary from arts and crafts to industrial design. Within the field of early childhood education, design technology describes an interdisciplinary educational approach in which young children engage in design as a process of solving problems. Children’s projects provide initial experiences with science and engineering ideas and devices such as wheels, axles, levers pulleys, gears, and forms of energy to create motion. Similarly, children learn ideas and skills from mathematics, literature, and social studies, as well as process skills such as collaboration, trial and error, and evaluation. Youngest children work on the simplest design skills, understanding different media and applying beginning mechanical ideas. For example, kindergartners may be challenged to design and create a bed for a teddy bear or doll.

Design technology is based on the assumptions that such experiences integrate different subject areas, problem solving and higher-order thinking processes; show the application of science and mathematics; teach teamwork; provide an intuitive basis for higher-level mathematics, science, and engineering concepts; and provide a valuable alternative instructional route, especially for children who do not respond well to traditional approaches to academics. As further examples, kindergartners may observe the shape of a cereal box when flattened out and then use what they have learned to design boxes to hold other objects. Not all kindergarten designs have to be “working” models. Some are verbal or pictorial representations of how it “could work.” Primary-grade children might explore and design mechanical “function machines,” which embody simple multiplication and algebraic relationships—for example, a simple system of gears in which one gear turns around two times each time another gear is turned once. Enhancement of creativity is a main advantage of this approach. Other important specific goals including providing girls with the kind of “tinkering” that enhances spatial, geometric, and mechanical abilities missing in many girls’ school and home environments.

The other two interpretations emphasize computer-based technologies. Of course, as the description of design technologies should make clear, technologies have developed for thousands of years. Before computers there were technologies of brushes, paints, pencils, and paper, and before this, children interacted with, and represented, their natural world in different ways. Educators must recognize that every technology may contribute to or attenuate children's development depending on its affordances and applications. We argue that there is little foundation for an a priori decision to expose children only to the technologies of any single era. Similarly, design of materials for early education has hundreds of years of history, but computer-based technologies, emerging in the 1980s, focused the field of instructional design, developed in the 1950s, on extensive curriculum development.

Turning, then, to the second interpretation, technology-enhanced curricula exist in many forms for most subject matter areas. They include technology supplements and complete curriculum including software, print material, and manipulatives. Research literature on these curricula is surprisingly extensive (see Clements and Sarama, 2003). In brief, many technology-enhanced curricula use computers to help children learn to read or write; to acquire knowledge and insight into science, mathematics, and other areas through design; and to support children's expression and development of creativity. They have to be used appropriately to realize the achievements, of course, an ecological issue to which we will return.

Computer-enhanced curricula can also have a positive effect on language development and **literacy**. For example, computer use can facilitate increases in social interaction and use of language, from preschool through the primary grades. Children who use prereading and reading software about ten minutes per day show increases in verbal and language skills, word recognition, phonological awareness, phonics skills, and reading achievement. When used well, computer-based writing also can be successfully integrated into a process-oriented writing program as early as first grade. Even younger students can use computers to explore written language. Computers can facilitate the development of a new view of writing and a new social organization (cooperative learning) that supports young children's writing. In general, children using word processors write more, have fewer fine motor control problems, worry less about making mistakes, and make fewer mechanical errors. Combined with telecommunications, technology also can connect classrooms from across the world together in cooperative writing groups (Clements and Sarama, 2003). As with literacy skills, children can use computer-enhanced curricula to learn mathematics (see **Curriculum, Mathematics**). Computer technology can provide practice-oriented arithmetic processes and foster problem solving and deeper conceptual thinking, including a valuable type of "cognitive play"—playing with mathematics. Children as young as preschool age can learn such skills as sorting and counting. Curricula that use software games and computer manipulatives also extend children's mathematical explorations and learning. They can allow children to save and retrieve work, and thus work on projects over a long period. They might offer a more flexible and manageable manipulative. Moreover, they can connect concrete and symbolic representations, such as showing base-ten blocks dynamically linked to numerals.

Computers can record and replay children's actions, encouraging children's reflection. In a similar vein, computers can help bring geometry to explicit awareness by asking children to consciously choose what mathematical operations (turn, flip, scale) to apply.

Technology-enhanced curricula can make a special contribution to **early intervention** programs and classrooms designed for children with special needs. Whether providing instruction or adaptive devices, technology offers critical benefits to children with disabilities. Software may have unique advantages including being patient and non-judgmental, providing undivided attention, proceeding at the child's pace, providing targeted, individualized instruction, and providing immediate reinforcement. These advantages lead to significant improvements for children with special needs. Augmentative adaptive devices can facilitate communication, movement, and control of the environment. Computer technology can also help teachers work with and track children's progress on IEPs. Children in comprehensive, technology-enhanced programs make progress in all developmental areas, including social-emotional, fine motor, gross motor, communication, cognition, and self-help skills (Hasselbring, 2000 #1955; Hutinger, 2000 #1945; Tinker, 2001 #2195; see <http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/index.html> for additional resources).

Several innovative technology-enhanced curricula have demonstrated positive effects in large-scale studies involving diverse populations of children engaging in early literacy, reading, and mathematics curricula (see **Interagency Education Research Initiative [IERI]**). Studies investigating the potential impact of the computer on the social ecology of the classroom indicate that computers enhance, rather than inhibit, existing patterns of positive social participation and interaction. Wise use of computers provides a learning environment that promotes high levels of motivation, discipline, independence, and perseverance. Computers may represent an environment in which both cognitive and social interactions simultaneously are encouraged, each to the benefit of the other. *This is if they are well used; if they underused or used without knowledge and skill, they will not have such benefits* (Cuban, 2001 #2085).

The third and final interpretation of a "technology curriculum" is instruction *about* electronic technologies. Since their birth in the early 1980s, such "technology literacy" curricula teach about the parts of various technologies, from computers to digital cameras; the functions and affordances of these technologies; and their social uses and abuses. Children are interested in such questions, and developing such knowledge is a useful goal. However, few present curricula deal solely with these issues. Instead, they are addressed in context of using technologies to support learning.

Thus, all three interpretations can be valuable. Technology-enhanced curricula are the most important, with wide-ranging potential. Technology literacy programs can be integrated into other curricula in a small but important way. An important exception is that focused media literacy education for *parents* and children can result in young children becoming less vulnerable to the negative aspects of all media and able to make wise choices. Finally, design technologies can make a contribution, as a single, but useful, pedagogical approach to STEM education.

An ecological framework implies that there are many influences on the effects of technology curricula. These may be part of the curriculum, such as features of software, or external to it, such as consideration of child-teacher and child-child interactions. Further, the child's home and cultural environment affect the technologies that are available and how they are used (New, 1999). For example, there remains a "digital divide" in which children from lower-resource communities have less access to computers and the Internet than those from higher-income communities (e.g., Haugland, 1994).

Research suggests that the strongest ecological influence is the teacher. Teachers require substantial professional development to use technology-enhanced curricula well. Some research indicates a harmful effect on children's technological competencies when their teachers have no, or less than ten hours of, professional development, while a positive effect has been found when teachers have more than ten hours. Therefore, single, simple workshops are not recommended.

Research on technology curricula has many implications for the content of professional development (Wang and Ching, 2003). For example, left to their own devices, young children may adopt desirable or undesirable patterns of interaction. Without teacher direction or formal instruction, five- to seven-year-old boys may adopt a turn-taking, competitive approach similar to that used with videogames. With initial guidance, however, young children can learn to collaborate and work independently. Other ecological factors, such as the ratio of computers to children, may also influence social behaviors. With a 22:1 ratio of children to computers, aggressive behavior occurs. In contrast, with a ratio of 12:1 or less, there is substantially less negative behavior. Thus, a 10:1 or better ratio should encourage computer use, cooperation, and equal access to girls and boys.

Equally important is the computer software used. This most directly affects child achievement gains. Educators should insist on complete research evaluations of any media (see Haugland and Wright, 1997, and journals such as *Children's Technology Review*, <http://www.childrensoftware.com/>). In addition, the type of computer software influences the types of cooperative interactions in which children engage. Children working in open-ended environments like Logo computer programming are more likely to engage in self-directed work and resolve conflicts successfully. In contrast, those working mainly with drill-and-practice software may give only limited verbal explanations for their work. Those working in cooperative computer-assisted instruction environments display more teaching interactions.

In summary, technology curricula include quite distinct approaches and materials. Each can play a role in providing high-quality early education. Whether creating things to meet a design need or using technology-based curricula, research is available to help educators make informed decisions to enhance the learning of young children about and through technology. See also *Augmentative and Alternative Communication; Development, Language; Disabilities, Young Children with*.

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Douglas H. Clements and Julie Sarama

Curriculum, Visual Art

Visual art curriculum has held a central role in the United States early childhood curriculum since its inception for most of its history. Although theories and practices of what constitutes an appropriate art curriculum for young children have changed over time, most early childhood programs have encouraged young children to explore materials and create artwork using a variety of art media. Individual teachers draw upon a variety of art theories and recommendations in their work with children, resulting in the broad spectrum of practices seen in early childhood classrooms today. As U.S. teachers experience an increased need for accountability to meet state-wide and national standards, some may question how art can be integrated into the daily life of the classroom. New light has recently been brought to the subject of visual arts in the early years by the world-recognized accomplishments of **Reggio Emilia**.

Historical Background

The tradition of emphasizing art in early childhood curriculum may have begun in the Frobelian **kindergarten**, where children were encouraged to create practical items such as woven placemats and punched paper designs (see **Froebel, Friedrich**). Nursery-school teachers of the early 1900s encouraged children to represent their ideas using a variety of basic materials such as crayons, clay, and paint in order to foster children's freedom of expression, thereby benefiting development. In the 1930s, John **Dewey's** influential contribution to aesthetic theory, *Art as Experience*, argued that art plays a critical role in society. Dewey argued that art illuminates common human experience and that every citizen deserves the right to aesthetic experience. During the 1940s and 1950s, Viktor **Lowenfeld's** (1947) *Creative and Mental Growth* outlined a developmental stage approach to children's artistic development that was influential in keeping the arts central in

early childhood curriculum while keeping the role of the teacher limited to the provider of space, time, encouragement, and materials.

In the 1960s, work by Howard Gardner and the Project Zero researchers outlined the relationship between children's art and cognition and confirmed the importance of fostering children's creative thought and expression. Continued support meant that the arts at this time were more valued in some classrooms for young children. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, increasing emphasis on achievement in isolated academic skills resulted in shifting interpretations of the role of the arts in early learning environments. This trend is apparent in the rise of state and national curriculum standards, frameworks, and increased standardized testing. These changes in curriculum focus have directed attention away from the arts in higher grades, and have affected the early childhood curriculum as well. Nevertheless, visual arts continue to be an integral part of most curricula for young children.

Theories of Children's Artistic Development

Theories on children's artistic development have informed the development and implementation of art curriculum throughout the twentieth century. There are currently four widely recognized theories which account for children's artistic development: developmental, cognitive, psychoanalytic, and perceptual.

Developmental theorists posit that children develop artistic skills by proceeding through a predetermined linear series of stages. During the 1940s, Lowenfeld described five stages of artistic development as the unfolding of a genetic process, thereby discounting the ability of the teacher to further artistic growth in children. Rather, the teacher was viewed as a guide. Wolfe and Perry refined the idea of developmental stages in art during the 1980s, defining each stage by drawing systems with distinct characteristics and purposes. However, developmental theories have received extensive criticism for their failure to account for individual and cultural differences. Golomb has criticized the lack of cultural context considered when assessing children's artwork in developmental stages, and developmental theorists have also been criticized for their "hands-off" interpretation of the teacher's role.

Cognitive theorists, such as Goodenough and Harris, argued that children draw what they know and that therefore, the creation of art is dependent upon concept formation rather than the developmental level of the child. Gardner's theory of **multiple intelligences** supports cognitive theory by linking children's symbolic representation with cognitive development. During the 1960s, the *Goodenough Harris Draw-A-Person Test* was founded upon cognitive theory. In this test, children's drawings of people were scored based on the inclusion of detail and realism; scores were found to correlate highly with other standardized tests of achievement.

The psychoanalytic theory of artistic development is grounded on the Freudian concept of the subconscious (see **Freud, Anna; Freud, Sigmund**). According to this theory, children draw what they feel. Psychoanalysts believe that children's artwork reflects their inner struggles and desires. As with developmental theory, psychoanalytic theory supports the idea that teachers can merely guide a child

to express him or herself through art. Psychoanalytic theory is currently used in the realm of art therapy, in which exploration of various art materials have been found to help children to cope with separation anxiety and offer safer ways for children to express feelings.

The fourth theory of art is known as the perceptual, or perceptual-spatial, theory. This theory argues that children draw what they see. For example, a child may draw a figure as a head with arms sprouting from it because these are the most salient characteristics necessary to represent a person. June McFee, in her book *Preparation for Art* (1970), expands the idea of a perceptual theory, suggesting that children's art is based on multiple factors, including perception, the readiness of the child to consider visual elements, the psychological environment in which children work, cognitive abilities, and developmental skills such as fine motor control.

Current Curriculum Practices

Stake-holders in the education of young children draw upon these art theories when designing and implementing art curriculum. As individuals interpret the merits of these theories differently, curriculum has become diverse in implementation. Art curriculum in early childhood in U.S. classrooms tends to fall on a continuum from more open-ended art experiences to more focused and directed activities.

Open-ended, process-based curriculum. Some teachers want children to explore and manipulate materials independently in an open-ended setting. A teacher implementing this type of curriculum presents children with a variety of art materials with multiple uses, such as pieces of tissue paper and glue, and invites them to explore and create whatever they wish using the materials. In this “hands-off” approach, no formal instruction is provided and there is little emphasis on complete products. The teacher does not want to interrupt the children's natural development of forms or self-expression. A teacher using this open-ended approach may support a developmental or psychoanalytic theory of children's art, and takes a more passive role as children engage in art processes. Some teachers following this curriculum believe that children should be free to be creative in their artistic work, rather than imitating and following a teacher's instructions. A potential drawback of this approach is that teachers often prioritize the importance of providing new materials for children to explore; as a result, children do not spend enough time with a given material to gain confidence or experience in using it. This approach has also been criticized for not directly teaching children the skills and techniques necessary to successfully use specific materials to achieve visual expressive goals.

Teacher-directed curriculum. Other teachers believe that children can gain skills in the arts through more explicit teacher instruction. Mona Brookes, founder of the Monart schools, upholds that teaching children a specific set of forms gives them tools they can learn to apply to representational drawing situations. This approach, rationalized by Betty Edward's *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (1979),

encourages children to draw representationally, and rests on the principle that children learn drawing skills by copying a teacher or master. Some art curricula in early childhood classrooms rely heavily on workbooks, repetition, and copying adult drawings. Although the children's work in programs such as these may yield high results in representational drawing, this approach is criticized for ignoring children's interests, restricting their creative processes, and interfering in the natural progression of development.

Teacher and child as partners in learning. Some contemporary early learning environments use a combination of child-centered and teacher-directed art experiences in the classroom. Teachers may use a variety of methods in order to motivate children's engagement, including both teacher- and child-directed experiences. Teachers might make art materials available as a fixed component of the classroom environment. Placed at the child's level, these are materials that the child can retrieve for her/himself. Another approach would be to set out materials as a "planned experience," or center that children may choose to participate in during a choice period. Materials may also be presented as the basis for a planned activity, and further motivated by the teacher's engagement and guidance in the activity. For example, a teacher might display prints of Matisse paper cutouts along with a variety of papers and scissors, as motivation for the children to experiment with paper cutout designs and collage. Content for these activities might develop from both the classroom curriculum at large, as well as the specific work the children are producing.

Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher in planning art experiences involves understanding the elements of design, setting goals for the children, and setting the environment to motivate the art experience through materials or tasks. There are a number of disciplines within the visual arts that can be implemented in a classroom with young children, such as painting, sculpting, or weaving. An early child-care teacher can facilitate an art activity through these disciplines through diverse art processes such as applying, forming, or interlacing.

Teachers may facilitate art experiences for young children to address local, state, and national standards for art, or to connect with emergent themes in the children's play. Teachers also may use art activities to address other curriculum standards in math, science, and literacy. Art experiences are used in early childhood classrooms today to promote healthy personal/social development, give children opportunities for self-expression, build skills in problem solving, and encourage creative thinking. Teachers often want children to be exposed to and gain experience with materials, as well as begin to understand symbol systems.

Planning lessons and learning Encounters. When a teacher chooses an activity in the classroom, she/he considers what activity and materials best fit the goals for the children, in terms of both the classroom context and the standards addressed. The teacher also takes into account the experience and development of the children involved. Teachers may plan lessons aimed to (1) increase observation skills and perceptual-spatial awareness of details, (2) encourage expressivity, work

from feelings, and identify emotional states through symbols, (3) encourage an awareness of artistic elements, physical knowledge of materials, and techniques, (4) encourage creativity, cultivate imagination and novel thinking, and encourage new ways of perceiving (Feinburg and Mindess, 1994). A specific art activity may address more than one of these goals.

Materials. In designing art activities, the teacher whose curriculum is both child-centered and teacher-directed chooses materials purposefully. Before setting up an activity, the teacher first experiments with the materials her/himself to understand what particular qualities might best work in an activity. Qualities of the material, such as size, shape, and scale of the materials, are considered in terms of what they might afford to the particular children and the goals of the activity. Materials can range from more traditional art materials, such as paint, to natural or found objects like leaves or buttons. In choosing materials and setting up the activity, the teacher takes into account what interests the children have and what might motivate their artwork. For instance, in order to encourage more active children to engage in visual art choices, a teacher might set out a box filled with marbles and several colors of fresh paint. The teacher would invite children to lift the box and move the marbles in different ways to mix the paint. The motion of the marbles and the more social aspect of the art activity might encourage members of the class to become more involved in the art area.

Environment. The teacher also takes into consideration the environment when setting an art activity. In creating a space for art within the classroom, the teacher includes as much natural light as possible, and organizes materials so that they are easily accessible and visible to all children. Different environmental juxtapositions of materials within the space, that is, when the child draws on big pieces of paper on the floor versus on smaller sheets of paper on a tabletop, might afford different results in terms of an activity. Changes in the environment, such as including novel environmental elements, doing an art activity in a new place, and restricting or limiting materials can be particularly motivating for children.

Creative process. In early childhood educational settings, teachers tend to give children time to use materials and get comfortable with the technical skills of holding scissors or squeezing glue, before they focus on the product. As children gain experience with materials, they gain confidence in their artwork. The creative process usually begins with exploring materials. The process then evolves as children focus their work, produce a creation, stop their activity, and evaluate or re-work their product. As children engage in the creative process, they may experiment spontaneously, move back and forth between exploring and producing, or work in-depth on a project. Based on the nature of the activity, the children may work independently or as a group. To keep children engaged in art activities, the teacher works to continually motivate children to think, feel, and perceive. Dialogue, objects, words, or images may be used as stimulation or motivators for projects. Teachers may consider the concept of Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development to help individual children gain the most from art activities. The teacher provides constructive comments that value the children's work, for example by pointing out particular elements of the process, or making comments that

draw attention to the elements of art. The materials, environment, and teacher's comments all contribute to making artwork in the classroom purposeful.

Art and technology. A growing trend to incorporate technology into the early childhood curriculum has meant that an increasing number of classrooms for young children have computers, digital cameras, and other technological equipment. Many of these technologies have potential uses in the art curriculum, and some teachers choose to use them in their classrooms. For example, computer software programs such as KidPix and Microsoft Microworlds give young children digital formats for drawing, editing, and manipulating digital photographs, or creating virtual worlds with illustrations, music, and animation. The inclusion of technology in an art curriculum has expanded the medium through which children can create and appreciate art. The availability of a rapidly developing range of technology and software promises to make this area of art a dynamic playground for growth and exploration in years to come.

Inclusion. In many classrooms in the United States today, children with special needs and typically developing children play and learn together in the same classroom. As different learning styles and individual characteristics are being acknowledged and appreciated, art may provide a way to interest or motivate children who might not otherwise participate. These trends demand that additional attention be paid to art curriculum planning, to ensure that projects and materials are made accessible and engaging to all children involved.

Inclusion means that teachers and specialists may substitute certain materials, spaces, or motivations for others during an art activity, in order to support individual children in the activity at hand. Frequently, specialists and therapists can serve as resources for teachers in determining which types of adaptations are appropriate for a specific child.

New Understandings

As more pressure has been put on teachers to meet standards in the areas of math and reading, the value and goals of art curriculum in the United States have been called into question. Although art has had a strong presence in the early childhood curriculum, the strikingly complex children's artwork that has emerged in the municipally funded preprimary centers of **Reggio Emilia**, Italy, has evoked dialogue regarding current conceptions of the capabilities of young children. The centers in Reggio Emilia integrate art within the curriculum and employ *atelieristi*, faculty who specialize in different areas of art. The *atelieristi* collaborate and co-organize materials, projects, and space with teachers. Reggio Emilia centers provide studio space, called the *atelier*, for work to be done in and outside the classroom. The children in these Reggio Emilian classrooms play an active part in the planning of curriculum. Children spend time each day using art media to represent their ideas, observations, theories, and dreams in graphic "**symbolic languages.**" Art is heavily integrated into the curriculum through problem-solving activities and teachers take great care to **document** their shared experiences as well as children's symbolic representations of their plans,

hypotheses, and emerging understandings. Reggio Emilia's approach to children's art builds upon theories of the relationship between cognition and **creativity** and emphasizes the potentials of drawing to learn as well as learning to draw. The philosophies of Reggio Emilia have become popular in the United States, and have begun to be integrated into "Reggio Emilia inspired" schools.

In addition to the influence of Reggio Emilia, philosopher Maxine Greene and scholar Eliot Eisner suggest a need to place more value on art in our current educational system. Greene states that art is essential for children to make meaning, think critically, and acknowledge the multiple realities that currently exist in society. Eisner upholds the critical value that art plays in our increasingly symbolic and visual world, honoring multiple perspectives and subtleties. Eisner also stresses the importance of art as it teaches children problem-solving skills that may yield more than one solution.

Conclusion

Exposure to the arts seems to be valued in U.S. classrooms, and teachers across the country are integrating art experiences in meaningful ways. By giving children diverse ways to order, interpret, and describe their world, teachers offer children more possibilities and entry points into the life of the class. Classroom art activities are not only a place for self-expression and tool use, but also a place to think symbolically, make connections between contexts, see multiple perspectives, and solve problems. *See also* Assessment, Visual Art; Child Art.

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Maggie Beneke and Megina Baker

D

DAP. *See* Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s)

Day Nurseries

References to “day nurseries” or the “day nursery movement” vary depending upon what country is being described. For example, the history of day nurseries in the United States is not the same as in the United Kingdom and the terms have a different “life” and meaning in those two countries. For the most part, day nurseries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be understood as day-care centers from the perspective of late twentieth-century terminology. Both were originally created to serve predominantly lower income families where the mother was employed outside of her own home. Today, these terms refer to the care of children whose mothers are employed, regardless of level of income. The terms and their associated activities can be described within the broad field of early childhood education, care, and development (ECECD, to utilize a broadly encompassing acronym).

Day nurseries are caught in the awkward nomenclature problems associated with the larger field of ECECD. In the United States, a multitude of terms have been used to describe ECECD programs and services. In a few cases these terms have, or have had, a reasonably “precise” reference (e.g., Montessori and Froebelian programs in their early histories tended to have a fairly specific identity), but in many other cases calling a program a child-care center, day care, nursery, day nursery, or even an infant school or kindergarten did not, and does not, necessarily provide insight into what such a program looked like or hoped to achieve. This lack of precision in ECECD labeling is further distorted by historical preferences for certain terms that often take on different meanings at other periods of time.

Day nurseries emerged at a point in U.S. history when nonmaternal care of young children was in social disfavor (a phenomenon that emerged in the 1830s, tolling the death knell for the 1820s Infant School movement). The earliest programs to describe themselves as day nurseries appeared in the 1850s and such self-described programs persisted in substantial numbers through the first half the

twentieth century (although in increasing disfavor as a name from approximately the turn of the century on). Various forms of what used to be called day nurseries persist into the twenty-first century, despite social support for **Head Start** programs commencing in the 1960s and the phenomenal growth of alternative forms of child care beginning in the 1970s and continuing to the present. Day Nurseries, like Child Care (a later twentieth-century term), have been stigmatized as a threat to the more socially valued role of “Mother Care” (see Pence, 1989). As programs that were designed specifically for the children of lower income (regarded by some as lower class) families, participation in such programs was stigmatized, and the provision of such programs was largely the undertaking of a variety of philanthropic, social welfare, and religious organizations.

One of the first day nurseries to open in the United States was the Nursery and Children’s Hospital of New York City. Incorporated in 1854, the nursery provided care for children from six weeks to six years, between the hours of 5:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M., for “the daily charge of infants whose parents labor away from home.” (Dodge, 1897). By 1904 the Federation of Day Nurseries listed over 250 member programs in over 100 cities in the United States. The great expansion of day nurseries, particularly in the period 1880–1900, was a reflection of changing social and economic conditions that witnessed a wave of over 9,000,000 immigrants, a related doubling in the total population of the United States, a shift from a largely rural to a primarily urban-based population, and an increase in the percentage of women in the workforce from 10 percent in 1860 to 20 percent in 1900.

These changes in the U.S. population and in its labor force characteristics did not go unnoticed by popular writers of the period who deplored this “new departure . . . [as] calculated, by thwarting nature’s evident design in making her child-bearer, child trainer, and house mother, to rob her of special gifts of grace, beauty and tenderness” (Meyer, 1891).

Most labor movements were similarly unsupportive of women’s role in the out-of-home workforce, with the American Federation of Labor asking at the time: “Is it a pleasing indication of progress to see the father, the brother and the son displaced as the bread winner by the mother, sister and daughter? The growing demand for female labor . . . is an insidious assault upon the home, it is the knife of the assassin, aimed at the family circle—the divine injunction” (Brownlee and Brownlee, 1976).

The power of the mother-care ethic in the United States was not lost on the promoters of a second key ECECD program to emerge later in the nineteenth century—the **Kindergarten** Movement, initially associated with Frederich **Froebel**. Elizabeth **Peabody**, foremost advocate of the earliest Froebelian Kindergartens in the United States (and herself a teacher in an infant school in the 1830s—a fact she seldom acknowledged in her writings and presentations), worked to obscure any connection between kindergartens and forms of “child care.” However, the stigma associated with the day nurseries was difficult to avoid. Nina Vandewalker, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century kindergarten historian, noted the dilemma programs such as kindergartens faced when they became too closely associated with what would today be called “child care” or “day care”: “One of the disadvantages [from the adoption of the kindergarten as a philanthropic agency] arises from the close connection that has been

established in the public mind between the kindergarten and the crèche or day nursery. The two have frequently been established together, both serving a philanthropic service. In consequence the kindergarten is regarded by thousands as being little if anything more than an advanced form of the day nursery, whose purpose is served if the children are kept clean, happy and off the streets” (Vandewalker, 1908).

An exception to the more general pattern of child care and day nursery stigmatization can be found from the mid-nineteenth century through the twentieth century, during the war years. In particular, child care and day nurseries had a more positive social status during the period of the World War II when women in large numbers were recruited into various “war industries.” As part of the “war effort” federal funds were made available to such programs as the two “model” Kaiser shipyard child-care programs in Portland, Oregon. During their two years of operation over 3,800 children received care in these federally sponsored and funded programs (Gordon and Browne, 1996).

With the exception of the war years, however, the jostling, competitive dynamic of day nurseries, crèches and kindergartens, described by Vandewalker in 1908, remained common in the United States in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Throughout much of the period from 1950 to the present, only those kindergartens and nursery schools that operated on a part-time basis (and were therefore “supplements” to effective mothering, and not “replacements”) were considered in the public mind as “good.” On the other hand, full-time child-care and day-care programs specifically designed to care for the children of working mothers have generally been regarded as poor substitutes for maternal child care. The mother-care ethos, expounded in the press and from the pulpit from the 1830s onward, remains a potent force at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century—over 170 years after its initial declaration.

The history of the day nurseries, regardless of the programs themselves and their claims to or lack of “quality,” exists in the shadow of an ethos of mother care. Day nurseries, like their descendants “child care” and “day care,” were and remain a class-based phenomenon—programs laboring on the far-side of respectability.

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Alan Pence

Deaf Children

Some 5,000 American families experience the birth of a deaf infant each year (Thompson et al., 2001). These children will experience the world differently than their hearing peers. Approximately 90 percent of deaf children have hearing

parents with little or no previous experience with people who are deaf (Marschark, 1993). Most parents today are aware of and sensitive to the importance of the early years for language acquisition and cognitive, social, and emotional development. The diagnosis of a deaf child raises many questions about how the hearing loss will affect the child's development and learning. Often parents cannot imagine what the future holds for their deaf child; they do not know how they will communicate with their child, how he or she will become part of the family, or how the family's decisions and actions can support their child's individual needs.

Today, the availability of newborn hearing-screening programs throughout the country has made possible the diagnosis of hearing loss within the first few months of a child's life. This is a dramatic change and advantage from just a few years ago when a child's hearing loss may not have been confirmed until the child was two years of age or so. Technology has also made significant improvements with the addition of high-powered digital hearing aids and cochlear implants. Families now have more options early on regarding amplification systems for their child; the decision about whether their child should have a cochlear implant or not is challenging within the family unit and extends even further when the controversy extends into the deaf community. This decision is usually made in the context of another question, and that is, what language and communication method is the family going to use with their child? Is it one that will rely on the visual system (American Sign Language or another sign language system) or on the auditory system (English or the family's primary spoken language), or will they choose to do both and be a bilingual family?

Fortunately, early childhood education programs for deaf children and their families and knowledgeable professionals are available to support the family in their decision-making and provide them with the information and skills to communicate with their child and to adapt the linguistic and social environment to match their child's attributes (Bodner-Johnson and Sass-Lehrer, 2003). Family-centered programming has become the cornerstone of the philosophy and practice of early education for deaf children. This has come about as the result of federal legislation; specifically, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA; Public Law 94-142) and the laws that have succeeded it (e.g., Public Law 105-17, **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** [IDEA] of 1997) dramatically influenced the pattern and delivery of educational services for deaf children and their families in the United States. Also, new knowledge has emerged from data based research that supports reformulating guidelines for the development and provision of early childhood programs for deaf children. For example, children identified with a hearing loss and who enroll in a comprehensive **early intervention** program within the first six months of life have been reported to have significantly better language and communication outcomes than their peers identified at a later age (Apuzzo and Yoshinaga-Itano, 1995; Moeller, 2000; Robinshaw, 1997).

A number of principles and guidelines have been developed that offer a framework for designing and implementing early education programs for deaf children and their families. They are summarized below and presented as foundational characteristics of these programs whether families use an auditory/oral, sign

language, or other communication approach to communicate with their deaf child.

Family Centered

The development of the young child can best be understood within an ecological (as outlined by **Bronfenbrenner**) and family social system (Minuchin, 1974) theoretical context. The ecological perspective locates individual behavior in its social context; the child develops within the family and the broader contexts of the community and school. Both child and context shape and accommodate to one another as they interact; development relies on the child's ability to understand and shape their world and to communicate effectively with those in their environment. **Family systems theory** points out that interrelationships among family members, more so than individual members, are central to understanding the complexity and diversity of each family. This framework sets the stage for developing programs and practices that establish the well-being of the family as a priority goal and one integral to planning for the child who is deaf. A family-centered approach addresses the family's strengths and concerns, is sensitive to family complexity and supports caregiving behavior that promotes the learning and development of the child (Shonkoff and Meisels, 2000).

Collaborative

Early childhood professionals who establish effective relationships with **families**, and join with them by demonstrating trust and understanding, can significantly enhance the family's ability to boost the development of a child who is deaf (Kelly and Barnard, 1999). Collaboration emphasizes the parents' role as decision maker with the early childhood professional and promotes the self-efficacy of the family. Family-professional partnerships facilitate family participation at all levels of the program. Families are able to make well-informed decisions when they have full access to complete and unbiased information; collaboration with families takes place in ways that are culturally appropriate and consistent with the family's desires.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Contemporary interpretations of **developmentally appropriate practice** serve as a guide to programs to develop a philosophy and work with children who are deaf on the basis of what we know about child development and family, community and cultural values. The child's individual learning and development patterns and the family's complexities and perspectives are considered for program planning. Developmentally appropriate practice programs construct experiences for children to learn through **play** and welcoming environments that promote ample opportunities for play (Gestwicki, 1999). Developmentally appropriate practice applies also to how adults work together. Professionals working with parents benefit from understanding the principles of adult development and learning in

their work with parents as well as with other professionals and members of the community who are involved in program provision.

Transdisciplinary, Integrated, and Comprehensive

For most deaf children, the focus of their early childhood program is on the acquisition of language and communication skills. American Sign Language falls on one side of the continuum, while the reliance on speech and hearing (an oral/auditory approach) falls on the opposite side of the continuum. In between the two are other communication options for the deaf, including: Cued Speech, Signed Exact English (SEE), Simultaneous Communication, and the Total Communication Philosophy. While communication and language is often a critical need area, professionals and parents involved in planning should be aware of the importance of a comprehensive and cohesive program, including transdisciplinary child assessments, appropriate consultative services and full implementation of an **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**. The IFSP is a process through which families and professionals identify a child's needs and strengths and the family's priorities and resources in order to develop a plan for services. Professionals from various fields, such as medicine, social work, speech and hearing, and mental health, as well as individuals from the child's community (e.g., child development center staff, deaf adults) commit to working collaboratively as a team to achieve common goals for the child and family. For example, today the deaf community and deaf culture is recognized as an important resource to the family and to the deaf child throughout his/her lifetime. A comprehensive approach to service provision recognizes the complex developmental needs of the young deaf child and supports an integrated model that emphasizes strengthening all areas of development, (e.g., cognitive, social-emotional, motor, cultural as well as communication and language.)

Assessment Based

Early childhood assessment aims to acquire information and understanding in order to facilitate the deaf child's development and learning within the family and community. Primary among the principles of assessment for infants and young children who are deaf—and for all children—are the following, which reflect a family-centered, transdisciplinary, play-based assessment model (TPBA) (Linder, 1993):

- An assessment that is developmental, transdisciplinary, holistic, and dynamic.
- The assessment should be flexible in structure to meet the needs of the child and family.
- It assesses developmental skills, as well as learning style, interaction patterns, and underlying developmental processes.
- Parents and various professionals from different disciplines observe the child together in a natural environment, where the child is encouraged to demonstrate skills through play.

- Results are used for the development of an individualized education program (IEP) or an individualized family services plan (IFSP) and become objectives and strategies for services provided by the early childhood program.

Parents have a key role and responsibility in working with professionals during the assessment process to provide information about their child's development and learning and the family's priorities and values.

Community-Based and Culturally Responsive

An individual family's perspective regarding their child's abilities, a family's child-rearing practices, their relationships with professionals and their involvement in their child's program are a reflection of the family's particular values and beliefs and should be understood within the family's cultural, ethnic, and linguistic contexts. When a program recognizes cultural diversity in the families they work with, it is more apt to offer greater choices and flexibility in the content as well as the delivery of services.

An individual family's community is a wealth of potential support for the family; their personal social network (e.g., relatives, friends, fellow religious peers, neighbors) and the organizations and programs in their locality (e.g., child-care programs, parent education programs, colleges, various medical facilities) are all resources that parents and professionals can tap into for information, collegiality, and assistance for specific need areas, such as respite care. Identifying and locating these community services could be a shared goal for the professional and parents but should be guided by the parents who indicate the need for certain supports.

Using Sign Language with Deaf and Hearing Children

Language development. An ongoing controversial topic that continues today is the best way to communicate and educate a deaf child. The most natural form of communication for a child with a hearing loss is one that relies on the visual system. In the United States, American Sign Language (ASL) has been studied by linguists and is recognized as a natural language that exhibits all the same features as spoken languages, using a modality other than speech (Valli and Lucas, 2000). It is recognized as the language of the deaf community in America and most of Canada. In the past it was often thought that a child who first learns sign language will lose the ability or motivation to learn to use speech as a way to communicate. On the contrary, deaf children—like all children—need to have a native language in order to provide a foundation to learn a second language. Once deaf children have a foundation and understanding of the “rules” of language in their native language, they more easily can pick-up a second language, whether it is in the spoken form or in the form of early literacy.

A practice gaining popularity today based on its success is the use of sign language to support language development with young hearing children. Research suggests that typical hearing children who are exposed to sign language (whether it is “baby signs” or ASL) are more apt to use signs at an early age rather than spoken language (Acredolo, Goodwyn, and Abrams, 2002). This is mainly attributed to

the earlier development of hand muscles and hand, eye coordination before the development of the muscles that are used for speech. These children then tend to “drop” the sign when they begin to speak. This practice is also based on the concept that a child’s speech, which provides parents and caregivers with linguistic information to which they respond, is not always sufficiently clear and the opportunity for supporting the child with appropriate input may be lost. When sign language is used alone or simultaneously with speech, the child is able to use the sign expressively, parents understand the sign and communication is successful; causing less frustration on the part of both parent and child. Young children enjoy the action involved in the signing movements and for parents and children, the iconic nature of some signs makes learning the signs easier. For example, the sign “drink” is signed by holding an imaginary cup and drinking from it (www.Sign2me.com).

The use of sign language with hearing infants and toddlers with spoken language delays has also served as a successful strategy for supporting children’s transition to spoken language, although not necessarily for all children with language delays.

Early reading. Beyond early language development, parents and teachers are using sign language as part of a multisensory approach to teaching reading. Traditionally, we learn to read by seeing, hearing and saying the word. Because the motor ability required for speech production is more complex for the child than that required for the production of signs, sign language allows the child to feel the word in the action of making the sign. Thus, another sensory avenue (kinesthetic learning) is being used in the learning to read process. In addition, sign language provides teachers with a cost-free tool that does not require additional materials and, again, is enjoyable for the child (Hafer and Wilson, 1986).

Summary

Over the past three decades, legislative and social commitments, theoretical formulations and research on development, learning, and families have come together to support a system of early education program provision that today is most encouraging for children with disabilities and those at risk. For deaf children, the development and widespread availability of newborn hearing screening programs have led to identification of hearing loss at earlier ages—often in the first two months of life. This means that families are able to receive individualized information and support from knowledgeable professionals that matches the particular needs of their child at a crucial time in their child’s development. The recognition of ASL as a language and the importance of deaf culture have created new opportunities for deaf children and their families that can lead to bilingual and bicultural learning opportunities. Preschool placements after early intervention for the deaf varies by state, region, and city. In many communities, deaf children who use sign language as their primary means of communication are generally not “mainstreamed” into Head Start or public inclusion preschools because of their need for an interpreter. In most instances, deaf children whose primary communication method is sign language are in preschool settings with other deaf children

where the primary language of all the students and teachers is ASL or another sign communication system. In this environment they are able to communicate directly with one another without the use of a third party (interpreter). In some cities, there are residential state schools for the deaf that have preschool programs that local children attend and/or families from outlying areas can choose to have their child bused to and from these schools from their hometowns. There are also other preschools options for the deaf that use a completely auditory-oral approach, or a cued speech approach, or a Total Communication approach. As deaf children become older more options for their educational placement become available depending on their location. In many instances, once children reach elementary school, they are mainstreamed with their hearing peers and placed in a typical classroom with an interpreter and/or assistive technology. There are many different methods and views as to the best way to educate deaf children, and children's individual differences influence the success of any particular approach. Regardless of the method utilized, deaf children are visual learners and need to use their vision to compensate for their hearing loss. Earlier enrollment in a comprehensive and integrated early intervention program presents challenges to the education system to provide appropriate services to younger and younger children and to make sure that professionals have the knowledge and skills to work effectively with these children and their families.

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Barbara Bodner-Johnson and Michelle Banyai Walsh

Department of Defense (DoD) Child Development System

The Department of Defense (DoD) considers care for young children of military members to be a workforce issue with direct impact on the effectiveness and readiness of the force. The demands of military service are many and challenging. The DoD points to the frequent moves, long family separations, and rapid deployments that make quality child care necessary to national defense and vital to military families around the world. The DoD Child Development System, one of the largest employer-sponsored programs in the country, serves over 200,000 children (newborn–twelve years) daily. Each service branch operates within DoD standards to ensure consistent, affordable quality care is offered and programs meet local military command needs.

The goals of the DoD Child Development System are to assist the commander in balancing the needs of the family with the needs of the military mission; to promote the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of the child; and to provide each parent with at least one affordable child care option for each child.

Although child care had always been a necessity in the military, it began primarily as hourly care and drop-off services supported by volunteers. The needs of each individual military installation determined the care available. But the demands changed dramatically in the mid-70s with the advent of an all-volunteer force. As the number of families, active duty mothers, and single parents grew, the military realized that in order to have a ready force, it must address the need for child care.

Today, the DoD child development program stands as a model for the nation. This was not always the case, however. Internal focus and investigation revealed the potential dangers and deficiencies of child care lacking adequate funding and oversight. In 1982, the General Accounting Office reported that the program did not meet fire, safety, and health standards and there was no oversight of family child care. At the same time, as has occurred in other child care and development programs, the DoD program experienced several highly publicized child abuse allegations. These events served as a catalyst for Congressional hearings in 1988, and in 1989 Congress passed the Military Child Care Act (MCCA) which became the driving force for change. By implementing these recommendations for change and the wide-reaching requirements of the MCCA, the DoD Child Development Program was able to reinvent itself and form a seamless system of child care for service members.

The MCCA required changes affecting the entire military child care program. Five factors have been key in developing the successful DoD system.

First is the systematic approach to the program. There are four components: child development centers, family child care homes, school-age care, and registration and referral. All components are equal partners in the system. A parent can access all components from one single point of entry. Training standards, inspections, and background clearances are equivalent.

Second is the recognition that a quality program costs more than most parents can afford to pay. The DoD is committed to a prescribed level of funding for all child development programs. On the average, parents pay half the cost of care in other centers. In family child care programs, DoD provides indirect financial support through equipment lending libraries, low or no cost insurance options

and training for child care providers. In most instances, DoD also provides direct cash subsidies as incentives for family child care providers to care for infants, children with special needs, and offer extended hours of operation.

The third element is strict oversight of all programs and adherence to standards. There are comprehensive unannounced inspections for all facilities and programs with mandatory correction of deficiencies within ninety days. Noncompliance can, and has, resulted in closure of a center or home. As a result, facilities are in good repair and there is high-quality, institutional-grade equipment that contributes to the positive development of children.

The fourth element directly linked to program quality is the wage and training program for staff. Military caregiver wages average approximately \$12.00–18.00 per hour compared to minimum wages in the civilian community and include a range of benefits. Competency-based training is tied to wages and an “up-or-out” personnel policy requires the successful completion of training. After completing training modules based on the thirteen **Child Development Associate (CDA)** competencies, all caregivers must complete twenty-four hours of training annually. Caregivers and trainers work together to determine areas that need strengthening. Low turnover provides children with the continuity of care so vital to their healthy development.

Finally, the commitment by DoD that all military child development centers must meet national **accreditation** standards established by **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** provides DoD an objective evaluation instrument by an outside organization. Because DoD Child Development Programs operate on federal property, they are not subject to state and local child care licensing requirements. However, programs meet comprehensive certification standards established by DoD based on state standards. This certification requires a thorough review of programs with special emphasis on staffing, health and nutrition, safety, and the physical environment. Uniform certification requirements ensure a comparable quality program from one military installation to another, thus providing DoD military and civilian personnel with consistency wherever they may be located. The combination of the DoD certification, equivalent to state licensing, and adherence to national accreditation standards results in a comprehensive review of all center programs.

At the present time, military families with young children have access to a variety of DoD child development options, including Child Development Centers (CDCs) at over 300 locations to provide services for children six weeks to 5 years of age. Most child development centers operate between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 6:30 p.m., Monday–Friday. Other options include **school-age care (SAC)** programs offered for children (ages 6–12) before and after school, during holidays and summer vacations and family child care (FCC) programs that consist of in-home care provided by certified providers living in government-owned or leased housing. There are more than 9,000 licensed and trained FCC providers. Families rely upon FCC to provide flexible child care for mildly ill children, and night, weekend and nontraditional hourly care for shift work or rotating schedules. Registration and referral (R&R) programs serve as a “one-stop” for parents to gain access to various programs and to obtain referral information about quality child care in the local community.

As an employer-sponsored program, the DoD shares the cost of child care with parents. Parent fees, using a sliding fee scale based on total family income, are established to generate approximately 50 percent of the direct cost of operating the total program. The remainder of the total operating cost of the program is subsidized with government appropriated funds. The average DoD weekly fee was \$84.00 in 2004 and did not vary based on the age of the child. In private sector child care, care for infants often costs parents significantly more than for preschoolers. Cost-sharing funds provided by DoD go to the programs, not to the families/patrons. This is a key difference between DoD employer funding and many other government or employer funding approaches.

The DoD occasionally receives additional Emergency Supplemental appropriations during times of war. These funds have been used to provide additional child care services including extended hours, respite for spouses with a deployed military member, and care for children of activated National Guard and Reservists.

The Office of Children and Youth within the Office of the Secretary of Defense is the point of contact for overall policy for child development programs in DoD. Each of the Military Departments (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force) and Defense Agencies (National Security Agency and Defense Logistics Agency) issue regulations based on these policies.

Janice Witte

Development, Brain

The brain develops dramatically and rapidly during the period of early childhood (Schore, 2001). At birth the child's brain weighs less than a pound, and triples in weight by the second birthday (Bloom, Nelson, and Lazaroff, 2001). Growth and development in brain structures and functions are reflected in rapid changes in the child's physical, mental, and emotional capacities. Developmental changes in brain structure and function influence and are influenced by the child's experiences and environment, and have dramatic implications for caregiving and education practice during early childhood (see Gallagher, 2005). Recent advances in knowledge about early brain development, including structural and functional aspects of brain development, have implications for early childhood care and education.

Overview: Brain Structure and Function

Described as "plastic" due to its ability to adapt and change, the brain manages, regulates, and responds to information from the body and from the environment. Before birth, the brain develops in orderly stages, beginning with the neural tube, which connects the spinal cord to the base of the brain, the brain stem, in the first four weeks of gestation. As this process is completed, the brain divides into three distinct sections: the forebrain, midbrain, and hindbrain. The forebrain divides into specialized sections: such as the cerebral cortex, the frontal cortex, and the prefrontal cortex. The brain develops in structure (regions of

the brain consisting of clusters of brain cells called neurons) and function (activities of the brain, such as sending electronic signals or hormone production and secretion). Structures important to early development and learning include neurons, the cerebral cortex, prefrontal cortex, and the amygdala. Functions include synaptogenesis, myelination, and cortisol production of the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal) system. These structures and functions demonstrate some ways the brain develops in early childhood, and are detailed below.

Neural Development

Neurons are the basic building blocks of the nervous system. Most of the human brain's 100 billion neurons are in place before birth. Through the use of electrical signals, neurons communicate messages within the brain and to and from parts of the body (Kolb and Whishaw, 2001). Information travels between neurons in an orderly fashion, from the dendrites (where electrical impulses are received) to the axon (where impulses are conducted away from the cell body). When information reaches the axon, it travels across a small gap, called a synapse, to another neuron. The synapse is the point of communication between two cells (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). Synapses rapidly grow more numerous and dense after birth, in a process known as *synaptogenesis*. A dense network of synapses facilitates transmission of more messages in the brain, affording better processing of cognitive, social, and emotional information.

In infancy, synaptogenesis produces more synapses than needed. Consequently, a one-year-old has approximately one and a half times more synapses than an adult (Bruer, 2004). Though scientists are uncertain why the brain overproduces synaptic connections, it is possible that it is nature's way of preparing children's brains for a variety of possible environmental and social experiences (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). Unused or seldom-used neurons slow their synapse production, in a process known as *pruning*. With pruning, neurons remain intact, but unused synapses are eliminated.

Children need a variety of sensory experiences to help neural material develop. When children are deprived of sensory stimulation, they may exhibit developmental delays and disabilities. Certain developmental tasks appear to have *sensitive periods*, or stages at which exposure to certain experiences is essential to developing certain skills. Probably because the brain is highly plastic, there are not many known sensitive periods for humans. Some aspects of language may not develop properly when a child is not exposed to sufficient language before puberty. Research with animals suggests that complex, stimulating environments improve synapse density and structure, but there is not sufficient evidence that complex or stimulating environments increase neural synapse material in humans.

During *myelination* a white, fatty tissue, called myelin, grows around the nerve axons. Myelin protects the nerves, speeds the transmission of electric signals, and prevents signals from firing haphazardly. Many areas in the brain are myelinated in early childhood, but some, such as the frontal cortex (responsible for complex thinking, problem-solving, and regulation) develop later in childhood. Slower signal transmission of neural signals, caused by unmyelinated neurons, is associated

with less regulated, disorganized behavior in younger children. Early malnutrition, in particular, insufficient fat intake, is associated with poor myelination (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000); therefore, quality nutrition is important for optimal brain development.

Cortex Development

The cerebral cortex is the brain's outer layer and is responsible for conscious activity. It has two sides, or hemispheres, which have specialized functions. The right side of the cerebral cortex specializes in processing negative and intense emotions, nonverbal and spatial processing, and creativity (Kolb and Whishaw, 2001). The left side of the cerebral cortex specializes in positive emotions, language development, and interest in new objects and experiences. These brain specializations are highly plastic: they change easily. When an individual has brain damage to one side of the brain, the undamaged area takes over the damaged side's functions (Kolb and Whishaw, 2001). An important consideration for early childhood concerning hemispheric specialization is that the sides of the cerebral cortex develop at different rates. The right side of the cerebral cortex grows more quickly during the first 18 months of life and dominates brain functioning for a child's first three years. This difference in brain hemisphere growth rate emphasizes the role of negative and intense emotion and creativity in a child's very early development.

The frontal lobes of the cerebral cortex are important for emotional development. The frontal lobes of the cortex allow the person to inhibit and control the experience and expression of emotion. The development of the cortex during the early years assists a child in developing self-regulation. At the very front of the frontal lobes, the prefrontal cortex is responsible for executive function, the processes of self-regulation, planning, and organization of behavior (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). Executive function is also closely related to, but not the same as, attention and working memory. The prefrontal cortex doesn't independently regulate children's behavior, but it works in concert with other structures of the brain and develops dramatically during early childhood (Schore, 2001).

The Amygdala

Self-regulation in children is dependent on two very closely interconnected areas of the brain, the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala. The amygdala, a small, almond-shaped structure, is believed to be the structure in the brain most connected to emotional and fearful reactions (Blair, 2002). It is interconnected with many areas of the brain, including the prefrontal cortex and neural pathways for vision. It is highly receptive and reactive in nature and is sensitive to environmental stimulation. The location of the amygdala, deep in the center of the brain, has made it difficult to study, but it is accepted that the emotional (amygdala) and executive function (prefrontal cortex) structures of the brain work cooperatively to facilitate self-regulation.

Stress System Development: HPA and Cortisol

One of the most important functions of the brain is to help the individual recognize and respond to danger and stress. The HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical) system produces the hormone cortisol. Cortisol fluctuates in response to stress, and contributes to the “fight or flight” reflex that helps the body respond to challenging situations (Kolb and Whishaw, 2001). People have a baseline cortisol level that is typical for their own biology and temperament. Cortisol fluctuates throughout the day (usually higher in the morning and lower in the afternoon) and increases in response to stress. In moderate doses cortisol is a good thing—it helps the brain respond to stress and solve problems. But too much cortisol production over a long period of time leads to problems with memory, self-regulation, and anxiety (Gunnar and Cheatham, 2003).

The HPA system and cortisol levels respond to social interactions and are believed to be connected to the child’s developing **attachment** system. From animal research, we know that nurturing parenting is important to the offspring’s developing HPA system. When mother rats groom their pups frequently, their pups have more stable cortisol levels and react less to stress. When caregivers are sensitive and responsive children have fewer increases in cortisol and are less reactive to stress. Children’s cortisol increases when separated from their caregivers, and when experiencing transitions. Children who experience extreme adverse conditions develop patterns of stress reactivity that includes increased cortisol levels, slow growth, cognitive deficits, and behavior problems. However, there is evidence that these patterns can be reversed when the quality of care improves (Gunnar and Cheatham, 2003).

The following are the major implications for caregiving and education:

- *Neural synapses develop rapidly in early childhood, and prune when unused.* Children benefit cognitively, emotionally, and physically from many, varied sensory experiences. More importantly, sensory deprivation can lead to cognitive and emotional problems for children.
- *The right hemisphere of the cerebral cortex, which experiences and manages intense, negative emotion, is dominant in early childhood.* Children benefit from interactions with sensitive, responsive adults who help them to manage strong, negative emotions. These caring relationships are particularly important in the early years.
- *Myelination is important for healthy transmission of neural messages.* Children benefit from nutrition that balances protein, carbohydrates, and fat. Fat intake should not be severely restricted in young children.
- *The HPA (cortisol) system develops patterns in response to intensity and duration of stress the child experiences. Frequent and intense stress in early childhood is associated with cognitive and emotional problems in childhood and into adulthood. Warm, sensitive caregiving is associated with lower cortisol levels and healthier growth, social and emotional development.* Children need protection from some stressors, such as violence and abuse, and benefit from interaction with caring adults who provide support and help the child cope with stressful situations. Early childhood is an important time for learning to establish productive social relationships.

Conclusions

Advances in technology have facilitated increased understanding of brain development in early childhood. As technology continues to develop, information about the brain's structures and functions will provide more insight to children's development. Some key concepts of brain development are supported by research.

The brain is plastic, and changes and adapts in response to experience. Adverse experiences have a lasting effect, but can sometimes be remediated by intervention. Some adverse experiences, such as exposure to toxins, abuse, and malnutrition, are difficult to overcome. Therefore, it is most important to protect children from harmful experiences, and assure that children receive proper nutrition, health care, and sufficient sensory stimulation (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

When children have birth defects or disabilities that prevent them from obtaining quality experiences in typical environments, intense and **early intervention** is necessary to assure that the child has sufficient experiences to compensate for difficulties. Children with sensory impairments, such as vision or hearing impairments, need access to high-quality early intervention. There is substantial evidence that early and intense intervention is effective in remediating some developmental problems for children with disabilities (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

Early relationships are an influential aspect of children's healthy brain development. When caregivers are sensitive and responsive to young children's needs, and provide adequate sensory stimulation, children develop competence in social, emotional, cognitive, and physical abilities. Evidence for this early connection between quality caregiving and relationships is substantiated by research on right hemispheric specialization and dominance (Schore, 2001) and HPA (stress) system development (Gunnar and Cheatham, 2003). Finally, research on brain development provides information about supporting children's development of self-regulation. The neural mechanisms for children's regulation develop through childhood and adult support is essential until those neurological mechanisms (i.e., myelination) are in place. Adults help children manage intense, negative emotions and support language development for children expressing their needs. *See also* Disabilities, Young Children with.

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Kathleen Cranley Gallagher and Maria Pelzer Bundy

Development, Cognitive

During an interview in the 1950s, newsman and radio personality Art Linkletter tried to catch five-year-old Tommy off guard by pointing out that he was about to interview a woman who was an octogenarian. Looking a bit puzzled, the child asked, “What is an octogenarian?” Linkletter replied that it is someone who is 80 years old. The child thought a bit and then said, “She must be really tall.” As Linkletter, the showman, anticipated, the studio audience laughed, charmed by the child’s “error.”

Lost on the audience was Tommy’s remarkable thinking. These types of “errors” whet the appetites of psychologists and educators. Rather than laughing, or at least rather than simply being charmed by a child’s insights, developmental scientists and practitioners ask several questions about the nature of Tommy’s thinking in this context. First, how is Tommy’s thought structured so that he believes that age denotes height? Second, how might Tommy’s thinking change over time so as to protect him from inappropriate intuitions in the future? Finally, how do Tommy’s interpersonal/intrapersonal realities mutually construct both his inaccurate insight at age 5 as well as move him toward a new, more accurate, representation of the relation of age and growth?

Contemporary theories of cognitive development have much to offer with respect to the three questions attributed to our scientist-practitioner. More precisely, recent theoretical developments coupled with new research provide new understandings of questions that have challenged developmental psychologists for much of the past century: “What is cognition?” “How does cognition develop?” That is, over time, is there a pattern or form to changes in thinking? And, finally, “What are the biological, psychological and social constraints on the nature and development of thought?”

What Is Cognition?

The fact that cognition, as a construct, permeates so many contemporary fields within psychology and education suggests there must be consensus on its meaning. That is not the case. A substantial body of work on cognition examines

various theoretical perspectives on cognition, often pitting one against another. Although there is no denying that these theories are incompatible on some, even fundamental, points, it is possible and fruitful to view them as complementary perspectives. Pragmatically, these perspectives provide lenses through which to view the complexity of intellectual life.

For many cognitive developmentalists, Jean Piaget's genetic epistemology is their historical touchstone when addressing the question, "What is cognition?" In fact, it was his training in biology that brought both a scientific orientation to the study of mental life and a conceptualization of psychological functioning as adapting. Adapting entails more than functioning, it implies structure, that is, the functioning of a structured organism. Cognition is an active organizing, indeed, an active constructing, of experience. Piaget coupled his scientific training with his interests in philosophy, and specifically, a fascination with epistemology. He viewed cognition as an epistemological function; thinking is the way in which we come to know or construct our understanding of realities. A more contemporary view of epistemology would recast his goal of specifying the structures that shape knowing as a question of how the mind is designed. Piaget would not be too interested in five-year-old Tommy's specific knowledge of age or growth. Indeed, Piaget and contemporary developmentalists would see through Tommy's conclusion to focus on the logic of Tommy's thinking that functioned as the backdrop to his inference that the 80-year-old woman must be very tall. They see Tommy's insight as a way of making sense of the fact that someone could be 80 years old.

More recently, cognitive sciences, and more specifically those interested in human developmental science, have shifted from cognition as an epistemic function to a metaphysical activity. This view changes our focus from how do we come to know, to what do we know. Rather than looking through Tommy's understanding of age and growth to the study of abstract structures, cognitive scientists of a metaphysical persuasion view aging and growth as ontological or natural categories; more simply put, as basic conceptualizations of theories about what we mean by living things. Focusing on children's conceptualizations of their realities shifts our theoretical focus from cognition as domain general to an analysis of domain-specific cognitive functioning. The goal of metaphysical analyses is to characterize children's "theories" of number, physical and biological realities as well as fundamental interpersonal activities among others. From a metaphysical perspective, Tommy's insight of the height of the 80-year-old woman is guided by his intuitive knowledge of, or intuitive theories about, biological aging and physical growth. Metaphysical theorists would assume that his "errors" were predicated on a theory that "over time, biological things grow" and "to grow means to get taller." Any questions asked by teachers or researchers would try to uncover his "theory of" biological growth.

A third characterization of cognition moves away from epistemology and metaphysics, that is, away from how we come to know or what we know, and toward computer science and information processing. Knowing is processing information, and the computer is the prototypic information processor. The constituent cognitive processes are familiar psychological functions like planning, attention, and memory. A radical application of the computer model reduces RAM to

working memory, hard drive to long-term memory, and software or programming to executive function, that is, the mental overseer that coordinates the flow of information between long-term and working memory. A radical information processing model does not capture cognition as human action or as intentional. A less radical model confronts that limitation by incorporating metafunctions. Human planning, attending, or remembering is not hardwired, rather, they are reflective activities that set goals, set strategies and evaluate progress toward that goal. The less radical information processing types would point out that Tommy's asking about the meaning of octogenarian revealed a metacognitive awareness. He knew he did not have critical information, he also knew that his interlocutor had that information. His erroneous insight would be examined in terms of whether, as he encountered people of various ages, he failed to encode the fact that older people are not always taller than those who are younger, or although knowing that, Tommy had failed to access that knowledge. If the latter is the case, did Tommy fail to access that knowledge or was the capacity of his working memory too limited to allow him coordinate all the relevant information?

How Does Cognition Develop? How Does the Way We Think Change Over Time?

The form and even the extent of cognitive development vary significantly from one conceptualization to another. Those assuming an epistemological stance (e.g., Case, 1992; Fischer, 2006; Piaget, 1966) generally view the development of children's thinking as progressive and hierarchically integrated. Case and Fischer were first identified as neo-Piagetians because they constructed theories that resembled Piaget's in fundamental ways; however, their seminal proposals as well as their more mature theories diverge from Piaget's theory on several significant points. Among them are their emphases on development as domain specific and, for Fischer more than Case, the idea that progress is not always linear.

Piaget's studies of cognitive development were grounded in domains: number, geometry, logic and propositional thought. However, he attempted to identify underlying structures, ways of knowing, that were common across these domains. For that reason his theory is referred to by many as domain general. From this perspective, Tommy's insight might be construed as symptomatic of a way of knowing, common to knowing across domains, which bridges his earlier thinking which focuses one dimension, for example, someone who is eighty is very old, to his later thinking, which coordinates three dimensions simultaneously, for example, years, aging and growth.

Fischer and Case would agree that Tommy's thinking is symptomatic of hierarchically integrated way of coordinating dimensions; however, they would not see it as symptomatic of how children are thinking in other domains at that time. They believe that thinking progresses, at different rates across domains, often following varying pathways, yet ultimately reaching a common level of functioning (Fischer, 2006). Thus, domain theorists part with Piaget on the form of development. Piaget and stage theorists in general characterize development as a staircase. They assume that there will be pauses in development as children consolidate their gains. Those pauses do not mask the fact that when there is change it is progressive. By contrast, Fischer abandons the staircase metaphor and adopts a scalloping image

of development. As stage theorists, progress in cognitive functioning is progressive over the long haul; however, new developments in thinking are followed by regressions to earlier levels of functioning. These peaks and troughs follow a common cycle of increased activity (IA) leading to reorganization (R) followed by reversals to a previous level (PL) of functioning (IA → R → PL → IA → R → PL . . .). The possibility, indeed the reality, of regressing to a lower level of functioning is at the heart of hierarchical development. Lower levels of functioning are built upon or modified, but they are not lost or abandoned. This movement forward with the potential for reversing suggests that cognitive functioning is economical; children work at a level of development set by their ambitions and societal demands.

Beyond the theoretical value of systematically examining the form of cognitive development through childhood, there is a practical value. As descriptions of epistemological functioning, Piaget, Case, and Fischer provide *standards of development* within which we can diagnose levels of cognitive functioning independent of psychological domain. Piaget's logical-mathematical scheme provides a broad-based diagnostic tool partitioning development into four stages from birth to adolescence. By comparison, Fischer's skill theory offers a fine-grained scheme composed of ten levels. As Fischer (2006) points out, ordinal scales of measurement of this type allow us to view children holistically, that is, as they are functioning across a variety of significant domains at various levels, without being constrained to an age-specific stage that may not adequately describe their capabilities.

Many of those adopting a metaphysical view of cognition focus on a restricted meaning of domain specificity. Given the fact that infants and children learn at such rapid rates, metaphysical theorists argue and provide empirical evidence that some domains are inherited modules (Carey and Spelke, 1994; Gelman and Brenneman, 1994). Modules are conceptual systems, intuitive ways of knowing that process information specific to a limited set of domains: number, biology, psychology, and physical laws. A significant body of research has focused on validating the claim of modularity of mind as well as describing what infants know about these domains. Research and theory on the manner in which children develop from these initial insights is not as well developed as the schemes identified by epistemological theorists. However, to this point they have identified questions that frame the question of what develops and what sets that development apart from the "what" of epistemological development.

From the metaphysical perspective, development is from an intuitive toward a principled understanding or theories about number, biology, psychology, and physics. From one perspective, progress within one domain is distinctively different from progress in the others because a deeper understanding of **mathematics**, biological, and psychological functioning as well as the laws of mechanics means knowing about categories of things of very different natures. The structure of mathematics is of a different kind than the structure of living organisms. Within this perspective Tommy's error in relating age and physical growth appropriately is predicated on his biological intuitions. Less clear within this perspective on cognition is whether change will occur in Tommy's thinking through the accumulation of more information about biological growth, or through a conceptual revolution that qualitatively reframes his theory of biological growth.

Cognitive modules associated with specific domains of knowing may be supplemented over development. For example, children develop social theories, which, along with biological theories, structure their thinking about gender and race (Hershfeld, 1994). Indeed, these theories compete with each other so that biological theory may override social theory leading children to assume that gender differences are natural; or social theory may override biological theory so that they believe the social segregation of races implies fundamental biological differences (Hirschfeld, 1994). Cross-fertilization may not always distort thought; there is the possibility that children may map one domain onto another analogically so that development in one area piggy-backs on advances in another area.

Information processing is directed more toward problem solving than knowing or knowledge. There is a significant amount of research indicating that working memory (RAM) increases with development. The majority of research and theory within development of information processes has focused on changes in strategic thinking, that is, the ways in which executive functioning or metacognitive functioning changes over time (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). If there is a common dimension over which to chart a part of development, it would be the increasing reflective capacities of children (Birney et al., 2005; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). For example, children's attention becomes more focused so that they tend to pick up less information overall than younger children do. Because attention is guided by expectations, they are more likely to attend to relevant information. Further, information processing theorists postulate that, with time, children become better able to plan and to monitor the effectiveness of those plans, to identify when plans must be modified and in what ways they should be changed to achieve their goal. Tommy's task was as much problem seeking as problem solving. He apparently wondered what it meant to be 80 years old. He framed it as a question of growth. Tommy's inference may be due to his failure to attend to the ways in which age and growth vary in his everyday experience. As he mulled over the relation of age and growth in working memory his information may have been limited or inaccurate. Or he may not have encoded the fact that his empirical experiences do not sustain a belief that there is linear relation between the two. In all likelihood, if he had been introduced to the woman, he would not have been surprised that she was not a giant; rather he may have turned his attention to other inferences on the implication of being 80 years old.

Why Do We Develop Cognitive Capabilities the Way We Do?

Those engaged in analyses of biological and psychological development have moved away from the proposition that organisms emerge from the interaction of nature and nurture or, more specifically, genetic material and environments. For a variety of reasons, various forms of **developmental systems theory** have replaced this two-factor account (Gottlieb, 2003). Psychologists have recoiled from the implication that psychological functioning is the epigenetic product of the joint action of biological systems and the environments that embrace these systems. This explanatory system discredits, if not ignores, the role individual humans play in shaping their physical and social worlds, especially their proximal worlds. In the main, psychologists align themselves with Meacham's (2004) triadic model

of human functioning and development; that is, psychological activity entails the coaction of biology, environment, and self. The critical theoretical point of this position is that cognitive activity, as an aspect of self, works in consort with biological and environmental systems to form a *developing system*. More specifically, this dynamic view rejects the possibility that neither our biology nor our environments is a set of fixed and enduring constraints on cognitive activity and its development.

Focusing on cognition is conceptually risky because that isolates it from the biological and environmental aspects of developing systems. The advantage is to allow us to view the nature of cognition and the form of its development that dominates thought in contemporary cognitive development. Within this narrow view, the parameters of agency as determinates of change emerge vividly. For example, Piaget's theory emphasizes the constructive nature of cognitive activity. Cognitive activity both constructs our everyday conscious experience of knowing, or being bewildered, as well as reconstructing our underlying structures of thought. Within *Biology and Knowledge* Piaget (1971) suggests that cognitive activity rewrites biological activity. On one hand this view anticipates Fischer's hypothesis that psychological and biological activity develop in parallel. However, Fischer is more cautious than Piaget; he leaves open the question of how these systems mutually constrain paths of development.

Those adopting a metaphysical approach or information-processing approach to cognition suggest a different relation between psychology and biology. In the main, they hypothesize that cognitive systems are hard wired. These systems launch development; they do not set limits on its paths or extent. Rather, consistent with the triadic view, these seminal systems regulate the way infants act as they are socially engaged, as they respond to changes in stimulation, and how they partition their world in the physical, biological, and psychological kinds. Because the hard wiring is a biological system, it develops as well, changing as infants engage their worlds and as their world responds to them or draws them out.

Thus far in the discussion the social worlds of children have not been examined formally, much less the dynamic relation of child and society. Informally, they have been evident in the hypothetical exchanges between Tommy and inquiring epistemologists, metaphysicians, and information processors. In each case, Tommy's inference provoked hypotheses about why Tommy came to his conclusion and questions about how to proceed to gain evidence pertinent of those hypotheses. These exchanges are structured both by *how* Tommy thinks and *what* we think about that thinking. At a practical level, which theoretical perspective adopted by the adult interlocutor is not critical; that the interlocutor has a perspective is critical because it structures the exchange and the potential path of the child's development. Structured exchanges between an adult and a child need not be an imposition of the elder's beliefs onto the child's. Rather, by encouraging and assisting children to ask good questions (Forman, 1989), the adult nudges and even urges the child to become an active thinker, and move to a new level of understanding (Fischer, 2006).

Too frequently, developmental psychologists have been content with the claim that "context matters." Yet a growing number of researchers now believe that

context is not captured adequately by differentiating, for example, cultures into collectivistic or individualistic; or social institutions, like schools, into demographically separate rural, suburban or urban; or social agents like teachers in terms of years of training. More useful information would be to know how these sociological distinctions translate into different opportunities for thinking and learning. Addressing this challenge transforms the importance of “context” as essential to the triadic system of development, to the importance of a decidedly richer construct, culture. Psychologists have begun to embrace the notion by adopting a sociocultural perspective. **Culture**, unlike context, cannot be reduced to something out there or something that contains the child. Rather, it is socially constructed and experienced through our participation. Within this view, cognition is viewed as an interpersonal activity. Returning to our example of Tommy, a sociocultural theorist would say that he is engaged in thinking through conversation with Art Linkletter and that conversation is mediated by language, the primary cultural tool for thinking (Rogoff, 2003). There are different conventions for conversations with preschool children from those characteristic of conversations with older children and these differences are often justified in terms of developmental appropriateness. However, views of when it is appropriate to talk about growth and aging, for example, mediate the opportunities for children to participate in conversations and also structure and delimit opportunities for children to think about human development.

Clearly if we construe cognition as a sociocultural activity, we are moving cognition from an intrapersonal accomplishment and activity to a psychological function that is socially distributed. Tommy’s knowledge involves more than an inference about the relation between age and growth. In all likelihood he is aware of this relationship not simply by taking note that older people are taller than he is, but because older people tell him how important this relationship is when they observe, “Tommy, you have grown so much since I last saw you;” or when remarking, “You are so big for a five-year-old!” Tommy learns that height is important and the conversations with him about age give him ways, or symbolic frameworks, of expressing the relation between growth and time or age.

Wedding a sociocultural perspective with those of cognitive development has practical implications and value. Theories of cognitive development are, themselves, culturally constructed and valued within the subculture of developmental psychologists. Scholars have their own kinds of conversations about cognition. They value these conversations and the ways in which they act to demonstrate the validity of claims made by each interlocutor, each theorist. In that sense they inform each other and sustain their culture. However, what is regarded as a theory within one society may be viewed as a tool within another; for example, a society of educators who are committed to the development of thinking. These tools shape the conversations we have with and about children. We ask very different questions when we are trying to guide children to think about *how they know* in contrast to the sorts of questions asked when we expect them to explain their own theories about biology, psychology, religion, society, and the world around them.

There is much more to development through guided participation as emphasized in the sociocultural perspective, but for the purpose of discussing cognitive development within the triadic developmental system, this brief review highlights the complexities of conceptualizing the environmental element of that triad. Cognitive developmentalists who heed the value of this approach must heed the warning that their epistemological trajectories and their metaphysical ontological categories may not be universal. This warning does not deny that there are universal characteristics to cognition, it only alerts us to the need to hold that idea as a hypothesis to be tested both across cultures with different languages and customs as well as within pluralistic societies where languages, customs, and values overlap or are shared. Further, theorists who adhere to each of the perspectives described in this essay must be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of all theories, not just their own. In this sense, developmentalists, and also the reader of this entry, might interpret genetic epistemology, domain theory, metaphysical theory, information processing, and sociocultural theory as complimentary to one another. As such, theorists, researchers, teachers, and the like would understand that each of these theories lends a great deal to the present and future field of cognitive development. *See also* Development, Language; Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s); Sociocultural Theory.

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Peter B. Pufall and Elizabeth S. Pufall

Development, Emotional

The development of emotion begins at birth and continues across the life-span. Emotions, and their expressions in face, voice, and gesture, organize and shape human behavior. Most theories of emotion agree that emotions involve a complex process of interaction between cognitive processes in the brain, physiological changes (such as changes in heart rate, body temperature, and endocrine systems), and the environment. Emotions help us to (a) orient, or pay attention; (b) appraise, or assess the situation; and (c) prepare to act. In the fields of psychology, child development and education, emotional development is often defined in conjunction with social development because the two are interrelated. Emotional development is inherently social in that it occurs within a relational context of young children and the people in their environments.

Development of Emotional Expression

Humans are born with the capacity to experience and express emotions from birth. In fact, emotions can be called the “language of infancy” as, even before they have spoken language, infants can experience emotions and communicate them through their facial expressions, cries and other vocal signals, as well as gestures and behaviors. Over the first year of life, babies experience and express a set of emotions which sometimes are referred to as “primary” or “basic” emotions, including fear, anger, disgust, and surprise. These emotions are evident in cultures throughout the world. Newborns, for example, show expressions of interest (by widening the eyes and intently looking) and disgust (by wrinkling the nose, sticking out the tongue, and turning away). By seven months infants display all six primary emotions: interest, joy, fear, sadness, anger and disgust. Infant facial expressions of emotion are comparable to the emotional expressions displayed by adults. Researchers have shown that both caretakers and random observers are able to reliably identify emotional expressions in infants as young as one month. This shows that infant emotion expressions have meaning to adults, and attributions they make about infant emotional states influence their behavior toward them.

Toward the end of the second year, infants begin to display other emotions that are sometimes called “social,” “secondary,” or “self-conscious” emotions. These emotions, which include embarrassment, envy, empathy, pride, shame, and guilt, are thought to develop as the child becomes more self-aware and cognizant of social conventions and rules. A young child, for example, cannot experience embarrassment until she is aware that her behavior is socially inappropriate. These “self-conscious” emotions do not become stable until the child is older and able to internalize rules and social expectations.

For young children to abide by societal norms of behavior and accomplish their goals, they must first learn how to regulate their emotions. Emotion regulation involves awareness of emotional states and the ability to modify emotional behaviors, sometimes inhibiting or changing the expression of emotions. The caregiver-child relationship is typically the primary context in which children learn to recognize, evaluate, and regulate emotions.

Emotion Regulation

How caregivers respond to an infant's need for emotional or regulatory support plays a role in shaping an infant's emotional and social development. Initially, young infants depend on their caregivers to help regulate or manage their emotional states, for example to swaddle them or pick them up to help them stop crying. Caregivers who are able to read infant cues and sensitively assist infants in regulating their affect help infants learn adaptive ways of regulating their own emotions. Over time, and through many interactions with caregivers, infants learn which of their communication and coping strategies work best and when and how to use them. When children are better able to self-regulate, they can more easily engage with the world around them; they are able to explore their environments and to learn. They become better able to establish and express a more varied and integrated range of emotions.

Of course, not all caregiver-child interactions are positive and seamless; in fact the very process of repairing normal, everyday negative interactions is crucial to the development of successful emotion regulation. However, children are sensitive to others' emotions, and when young children live in environments in which they consistently and repeatedly experience negative interactions with caregivers their emotional development can be put at risk. In cases where a mother is suffering from serious depression, for example, the mother's ability to respond to her child may be diminished by her symptoms, expressed in withdrawal from interaction, or hostile, intrusive kinds of behavior. A depressed caregiver's inability to scaffold and respond in a sensitive manner may result in repeated interactive failures that culminate in negative affect. Over time, a child may begin to see her attempts to engage with others as fruitless and eventually lose the motivation to engage with those around her. As well, in environments of chronic stress or situations of abuse and neglect, young children can develop a lowered sensitivity to stress and fear and maladaptive coping methods and interactional styles that can lead to future social and emotional difficulties.

Emotional Attachments

One of the primary goals of infancy is to establish and maintain relationships with attachment figures. Secure **attachment**, a strong emotional bond between two people, characterized by trust or confidence that the attachment figure will help in times of stress, is thought to be established through readily available, sensitive, and responsive caregiving. Predictable and sensitive caregiving environments increase the infant's opportunities for positive social interactions and experiences. A secure attachment with a primary caregiver provides a foundation for positive emotional development. Children with secure attachments are more effectively able to regulate negative affect.

The development of attachment depends on the "emotional availability" of the caregiver and the infant. The construct of *emotional availability*, which relates to the positive and negative emotional expression and responsiveness of both caregiver and child, is considered central to healthy socioemotional development.

Temperament

Emotion regulation involves the child's temperament, the constitutional predispositions of each individual that influence emotional development. **Temperament** refers to a child's susceptibility to emotional stimuli, how reactive he is to events, and the strength and speed of his response. For example, a two-year-old child may be easily angered by being blocked from a goal, might quickly respond with yelling and kicking, and might be difficult to console. Another child, faced with the same situation, might take longer to get upset, show only mild anger (e.g., fussing), and would more easily and quickly regulate the negative affect. While temperament is thought to be part of our physiological makeup (in part, genetic), the ways in which a child's temperament is expressed can be modified by the environment. The "*goodness of fit*" (or degree of match) between a child's temperament and the caregiving environment is important. For example, a temperamentally shy child may be challenged by a parent who expects and encourages loud, boisterous behavior and easy interaction with strangers. Similarly, an active, uninhibited child may not adapt as well to a highly structured center-based daycare setting where each child must follow a strict schedule.

Understanding Others' Emotions

The ability to recognize and understand emotions is critical for positive social development. Infants as young as six and seven months are able to decipher emotional expressions such as sad expressions from happy ones, but it is not until later in the first year that infants are able to use this information in a meaningful way. One way in which young children begin to take advantage of emotional information is through "social referencing."

Social referencing is the utilization of the emotional responses and expressions of others to gain a better understanding of an environment or an event. An infant, for example, may check a caregiver's emotional expression before approaching a novel toy or person. If a caregiver shows, through his or her emotions (voice, face, and gesture), that an event or object is "okay" or "forbidden," a child will use these cues to guide her behavior (by approaching or avoiding the object). Young children initially rely on the emotional expressions of caregivers to evaluate a situation, but as children get older their use of social referencing extends to others.

Social referencing is one example of the ways in which emotions and their expressions become socialized during childhood. Caregivers show that emotions are acknowledged, accepted, or rejected through their behavior. They may provide emotion labels for children's behavior "you're acting sad," or encourage children to change their emotion states and behavior "come on, let's see a happy smile" or "even when you're mad, it's not okay to hit." Caregivers may encourage children to change the way they express an emotion or they may fail to acknowledge certain emotion states by not talking about them.

During the toddler and preschool years, young children come to recognize that others' emotional states are not necessarily the same as their own. Sometimes they work to change others' emotion states. For example, young children can

feel empathy for someone in distress, and share that emotion. Emotions can be a guide to action, and young children who realize that emotion states can be changed might, in this example, bring a “blankie” to another upset child in an attempt to alter the emotion state.

During the preschool years, young children become increasingly sophisticated in their ability to interpret and verbalize their emotions and the emotions of others. The ability to recognize and interpret emotions in self and others, to understand them, and to regulate one’s own emotions, is sometimes referred to as “emotional intelligence.” These abilities are highly correlated with positive peer interactions and social competency in childhood. *See also* Development, Social.

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Joan Riley Driscoll and M. Ann Easterbrooks

Development, Language

The process of language development begins long before children utter their first conventionally formed utterances. In fact, words represent only one of the many communicative resources that are involved. As a result, the major theoretical perspectives in the field include not only a focus on the development of language itself but also a more multimodal view of communication that couches the child’s developing language in a complex of representational resources. This essay explores some of the central foci in the field, ranging from the nativist, or biological, requirements for language development to some of its social, cultural, and extraverbal aspects.

From the behaviorist perspective, prevalent by the early 1960s, language development results from the influence of the environment on the child (see **Behaviorism**). The child’s language behaviors are thus molded through the positive or negative reinforcement of a progressively narrower selection of target behaviors. Language acquisition is a result of exposure to linguistic stimuli as well as the engagement of the child’s own learning capacity. Nonetheless, some sort of neurological hard wiring is necessary to link language input with the language patterning that is recognized, accepted, and used by the speakers of a language. In response, Chomsky (1965) posited the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), an innate mental storehouse of the universals of linguistic structure. The device shapes incoming linguistic experience, or input, into the grammar (i.e., output) of the particular language from which the input derives. More than a catalogue of all possible individual utterances in a given language (Pinker, 1994), LAD accounts for a speaker’s ability to generate grammatically new and novel utterances by

relating and manipulating the structures operating in a particular language (e.g., *the boy caught the ball* becomes *the ball was caught by the boy*). LAD reflects the view that language development cannot be explained as either the product of cultural exigencies alone (Pinker, 1994) or as the result of simple imitation. Neurolinguistics has more recently aimed to explain precisely how the brain organizes the phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic systems that enable human communication (e.g., Opler and Gjerlow, 1999).

Utterances, however, also occur in social contexts—real situations in which child participants use language to define, advocate, and accomplish their own purposes. Thus, the interactionist view of language development adds a complementary construct: the Language Acquisition Support System (i.e., LASS) (Bruner, 1983). On this view, the adult world provides a support system for the development of the child's language, a "transactional format" (Bruner, 1983, p. 19) by means of which children can try out and consolidate linguistic changes with others. For example, to construct and manage joint attention between herself and an infant, a mother may introduce objects by interposing them between herself and the infant (e.g., *see the pretty dolly?*) (Bruner, 1983, p. 71). Phonetically consistent forms are integrated into socially well-established games and routines (e.g., "where" and "what" games) that relate linguistic signs to elements of the immediate, nonlinguistic context (Bruner, 1983, p. 77). On the other hand, mothers may follow the child's lead by limiting the semantic content of their speech to those constructions that already occur in the child's repertoire (Snow, 1977). This, in turn, produces the grammatical simplicity of the mothers' speech. On this view, grammar simply works to express meanings that the child already possesses. This means that the teaching and practicing of specific grammatical structures will affect language acquisition "... only after the child has independently developed the cognitive basis which allows him to use that structure" (Snow, 1977, P. 48). It is thus the continuing exchange of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge that makes possible the development of discourse patterns that then transfer to other contexts such as picture-book reading, where the exchange is built on non-concrete, pictured topics. The child responds, not just to the form, but also to the intent with a referent, and not simply with a repetition of the adult's language. The operation of LASS and LAD are thus interdependent, the socially generative nature of language as a communicative resource requiring both constructs (Bruner, 1983).

Cultural variance in the ways in which children learn to play appropriate communicative roles has also been explored in several ethnographies that document the ways in which children are socialized into patterns of linguistic as well as communicative competence (e.g., Heath, 1983). These patterns reflect prevalent attitudes toward learning and toward the role of talk itself in various cultural settings. The child is never "in it" alone, but is constantly engaged in highly constructive processes of generating and exchanging meaning with "significant others" who "create the system along with the child" as the child, in turn, "helps the process along" (Halliday, 1980, p. 10). Children help by constructing a "proto-language" beginning at the age of five to seven months by intentionally addressing symbols—sounds or gestures—to others who will "decode" them (Halliday, 1980, p. 9). Pointing, for example, quickly moves from functioning as a simple gesture to designating particular referents (i.e., something needed or wanted). Such a

protolanguage communicates meaning but without verbal syntax or vocabulary. The child next needs to turn the proto-language into a three-level system of meanings, wordings, and sound. The adult's function in this process is not to model the language for imitation, but to participate in the process along with the child as an equal partner.

Along these lines, the early work of Elizabeth Bates (1976) explored the child's *intention* to communicate in terms of the development of pragmatic competence—the child's ability to formulate goals and to select suitable means for accomplishing them. In the sensorimotor stage, for example, children engage in the formulation of object-goals and the selection of suitable means to accomplish the “protoimperative” function of recruiting an adult as a means to attain an object or another goal (Bates, 1976, p. 51). The formulation of the goal then combines with “instrumental behaviors” such as reaching, opening and closing the hand, cooing sounds, and gaze (Bates, 1976, p. 55), and this may occur even before there is evidence of a symbolic capacity, according to Bates. Although the child may be unaware of the signal value of these extraverbal elements, the adult interprets and responds as if to a signal. In this way, gestural communication does provide a framework for early language development; however, language does not come to replace gesture; instead, children support their linguistic communication by means of these gestural complexes by the end of the first year (Volterra et al., 1979).

In fact, the rate at which different children develop language can differ by a year or even more; however, vowel sounds and syllable-like consonant-vowel sequences begin to occur between six and twelve months. Although babies can comprehend simple words and intonation as early as ten months, their receptive language capacities tend to outpace their productive capabilities between one and two years of age. Nonetheless, children begin to produce holophrases and one-word utterances not limited to only nouns, but also including social expressions (*bye bye*), verbs (*go*), descriptive vocabulary (*hot*), and locational expressions (*up*) (Lindfors, 1987). At about twenty months, combinatory speech (i.e., using two-word utterances) begins. Vocabulary development speeds up dramatically and by about two years of age, the child possesses a vocabulary of over 200 words, correctly ordered in 95 percent of utterances (Pinker, 1994). Through age 6, the average child's vocabulary increases by as many as ten words per day; additionally, children continue to develop morphosyntactic knowledge even beyond the age of eight (Chomsky, 1969).

Does a critical period exist during which first language (FL) acquisition best takes place? Based on work on brain lateralization by Lenneberg (1967) and evidence from studies of children with **Down Syndrome**, **deaf children**, and linguistically isolated children, a critical period for language learning was hypothesized to last from about two years of age to puberty after which the process is supposedly neither as rapid nor as successful. Although many accept the view that there is a window for optimal morphemic and syntactic knowledge lasting from birth to age 12 or 14, evidence does exist to counter the critical period hypothesis. Studies of group performance indicate a gradual decline, but not an abrupt drop-off, in the ability to acquire more complex syntactic features but not simpler ones (Bialystok and Hakuta, 1994). In fact, pragmatic, semantic, and vocabulary

acquisition capacities may not diminish with age. Thus, the critical period hypothesis remains somewhat controversial and must be considered along with additional factors that are crucial to language development. These include the frequency and richness of the linguistic interaction experienced by the child as well as other social and cultural, rather than solely biological, factors.

Typological differences in various languages do, however, affect children's everyday talk as they develop those languages. Very young German speakers, for example, talk about placement (i.e., causing an inanimate object to move to a place) by relying on the expression of spatial vectors through particles such as *inward*. In contrast, children who are acquiring Hindi or Turkish tend to favor verbs such as *put* or *attach* for talking about placement. While Hindi and Turkish are languages that express the path of motion in the verb, German expresses this by means of a satellite element to the verb such as a suffix or particle. Children none in on these sorts of typological differences very early on in the language development process (Bowerman et al., 2002).

Nonetheless, oral language works as only one of the multimodal mediators by means of which children construct and express the meanings that they recruit to transform their interactional environments. As children develop oral language, it becomes "... an accompaniment to and an organizer of their symbolic action" in other systems involving print and graphics, for example (Dyson, 1989, p. 6). Neither do children invariably foreground language as a communicative resource; they look instead to find "'best ways' of representing meanings; in some circumstances language may be the best medium; in some a drawing may be; in others color may be the most apt medium for expression" (Kress, 1997, p. 37). Children's communicative development thus makes interdependent use of resources that may be verbal (i.e., the segmental and suprasegmental features of oral language, or texts in written language), visual (e.g., color, texture, line and shape), gestural (e.g., facial expression, hand movements), and actional (i.e., full body movement).

In classrooms, however, teacher talk also mediates the discourse in ways that extend well beyond the transmission of information to enacted definitions of learning, knowledge, communicative competence, and educational equity. Teacher talk thus shapes children's language in both direct and indirect ways; for instance, the use of "inauthentic" questions that require children to merely "display" known information tends to prompt factual, short answers while "authentic" questions that displace the teacher as the sole possessor of knowledge tend to elicit longer and more complex responses because a negotiated space is required (Cazden, 2001, p. 46). Peer talk, too, shapes child language in classroom discourses, but teachers act as reminders (not just as models) of what children can do communicatively. Although peer teaching may be seen to derive, in some sense, from the interactional pattern that the teacher has established in the classroom, children often mirror this in their own language behavior as well as in the kind of social negotiation and problem solving for which the **classroom discourse** makes room.

Teacher talk is also especially critical to providing young children with opportunities to hear and use "challenging vocabulary" or "rare words" that extend beyond basic "school readiness" language such as color term rehearsal (Dickenson, 2001, p. 238). Teachers can enhance children's engagement in higher-order

thinking by incorporating into their interactions a wide range of interesting words that children can then contextualize in their play. In this way, and by providing interactions that extend across several turns, teachers of three- and four-year-olds can provide conversational space for the development of a range of oral language and print uses that will occur in the kindergarten. Children's long-term language growth is also impacted by the total number of words and variety of words used with peers in free play, although free play must be appropriately balanced with more structured activity. Children who, as four-year-olds, have interacted with teachers who reduce the amount of their own talk in favor of lengthening the children's contribution to the conversation also show better kindergarten performance (Dickenson, 2001).

All along the way, language development includes children's engagement in the multimodal discourses that comprise their lives at home and in school. Young communicators do not simply reproduce convention. Teachers can enhance and respond to children's communicative development by creating environments, or sets of contexts, where children can practice questioning, arguing, remembering, and imagining through the orchestration of self-selected combinations of multiple modes—including oral and written language. This enhances language development by linking it to a complex of motivated signs that reflect children's interests as individuals interacting with others (Kress, 1997). Such a multimodal view becomes especially crucial to the integration of verbal, visual, and actional resources in classroom discourse that can no longer be seen as language-centered. On the contrary, language here emerges as one of a range of resources to serve purposes that arise in the moment and recur over time in expansive communicative environments. *See also* Development, Brain; Bruner, Jerome.

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Susan Jane Britsch

Development, Moral

Moral development is the domain in which children grow in their ability to think and act according to their understanding of what is right and wrong. As their moral understanding develops, children are increasingly able to act with the needs of others in mind and resolve moral dilemmas based on ideals of justice, fairness, or caring. Factors in this area of development are children's innate predisposition for empathy, modeling of adults and peers, explicit teaching, transmission of cultural values and their own experiences in interactions with others. Moral development is closely related to cognitive as well as social-emotional development. What we know about young children's development of moral reasoning is based on, first, the cognitively oriented theories of Jean **Piaget** and Lawrence Kohlberg (as modified and extended by later researchers including William Damon, Elliot Turiel, Carol Gilligan, and others); and second, the more emotionally oriented research studies that uncover young children's early capacities for empathy, sympathy, and prosocial behavior as well as shame and guilt in conscience development (for these emotional aspects, see **Development, Emotional, Development, Social, and Social Curriculum**). Aspects of current thinking about children's moral development include an emphasis on children's multidimensional moral competence and on recognition of the role of cultural and familial contexts in children's moral development.

Cognitive Stage Theories of Moral Development

In keeping with his theory of stages of **cognitive development**, Piaget also describes stages of moral development. Young children in Piaget's preoperational stage engage in *moral absolutism* and *realism*, a morality of constraint based on simple awe for adult power, concern for concrete rewards and punishment, and unquestioning adherence to outside commands. *Moral relativism* and *autonomy* come later in middle childhood when children develop more elaborate ideas about moral intentionality, extenuating circumstances, mutual parent-child respect, and knowledge about where rules and laws come from and how they can be changed—all associated with concrete or formal operational thinking.

Lawrence Kohlberg extended Piaget's work to develop a stage theory that includes the moral reasoning of adolescents and adults. His six stages are based on the moral judgments that individuals make when grappling with moral dilemmas that involve conflicting issues of right and wrong. To illustrate the differences in reasoning at each stage, he offers a moral dilemma faced by a man he calls Heinz whose wife is dying. The druggist is charging Heinz a great deal of money for the drug that will save his wife. Heinz must decide if he should steal the drug. For Kohlberg, moral development lies in cognitive-structural advances in reasoning about the issues of life, law, property, family roles, authority, crime and punishment that are evoked by the dilemma. (See table for the six stages.) In Kohlberg's theory, young children (about age 6) are typically Stage 1, oriented to simple obedience, but during middle childhood, move to Stage 2, where they make decisions based on tit-for-tat justice, and instrumental rewards and punishment.

Moral Development: Comparison of Theories of Moral Reasoning

Extending Kohlberg's theory, William Damon elaborated Kohlberg's descriptions of younger children's moral thinking based on his studies of their ideas about sharing and other kinds of positive justice, for example, what is right to do when dividing up five cookies among two children, or setting bedtimes for two siblings of different ages. His stages reflect his view of young children's increasing perspective-taking ability and their awareness that adult desires are independent of their own.

Eliot Turiel challenged Kohlberg's inclusion of children's responses to all kinds of "good" and "bad" behavior as parts of morality. Instead, Turiel has focused on reasoning about moral rights and wrongs as separate from *social conventions*. He claims that young children intuitively appreciate a difference in kind between, say, a moral violation of someone's rights (e.g., not to be hurt or to have their property stolen) and a social conventional violation (which concerns rules about the customary, polite, or orderly way of doing things). These intuitions arise out of their own experiences in social interaction.

Challenging another aspect of Kohlberg's theory, Carol Gilligan disputed the emphasis on morality as reasoning about justice and instead focused on morality as reasoning about caring, connectedness, and support for relationships. When thinking about dilemmas, many people (particularly women, Gilligan claims) draw away from absolute decisions separated from contextual and particular issues, but instead seek alternatives that will most strengthen or do least harm to the individual relationships involved. As children grow older, their reasoning about relationships and connections grows more elaborate and fine tuned in a way parallel to but distinct from what happens with their reasoning about justice issues. Gilligan's work points to the impact of gender and possibly other aspects of identity on moral themes that people highlight as they struggle with moral temptations and dilemmas.

Nel Noddings draws on philosophy (not psychology) to support her premise that caring, empathy, and altruism provide a perspective for understanding children's moral actions. She offers a distinctive view on the idea of caring as the *ethic of care*, and describes caring as a reciprocal action that "teaches" or "nurtures" both the one who gives care and the one who receives care. An early childhood environment of active caring with opportunities for children to both provide

Piaget	Kohlberg	Damon	Gilligan
<p>Stages of children's moral development align with stages of cognitive development.</p> <p><i>Moral realism:</i> Children make decisions by following rules as determined by others without questioning authority (preoperational thinking)</p> <p><i>Moral relativism:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional morality: Rule-orientation includes ideas of fairness and equality (concrete operations) • Autonomous morality: Children consider aspects of the situation, such as intention, when making decisions (formal operations) 	<p>Additional stages extend to the highest level adult reasoning</p> <p><i>Preconventional</i> Stage 1: Punishment and obedience orientation: Decisions conform with adult authority to avoid punishment</p> <p>Stage 2: Naïve instrumental hedonism: Decisions are based on rewards and self-interest.</p> <p><i>Conventional</i> Stage 3: Conformity and approval: Good boy/good girl decisions made to please others</p> <p>Stage 4: Conformity to social order: Decisions follow society's laws and rules</p> <p><i>Postconventional</i> Stage 5: Law as social contract: Laws are made by people who can agree to change them</p> <p>Stage 6: Universal ethical principals: respect for human dignity guides all decision making</p>	<p>Stages describe very young children's moral reasoning</p> <p><i>Stage 0A:</i> Undifferentiated reasoning based on self-orientation; own wishes and needs are satisfied</p> <p><i>Stage 0B:</i> Undifferentiated reasoning based on strict equality, the same for all</p> <p><i>Stage 1A:</i> Differentiated reasoning based on merit. Hard worker deserve more</p> <p><i>Stage 1B:</i> Differentiated reasoning based on need with some consideration of merit and reciprocity</p>	<p>Instead of stages, different perspectives or orientations guide moral reasoning, more aligned with gender than with age</p> <p>Abstract justice and fairness/individual orientation</p> <p>Versus Relationships and caring/other or interpersonal orientation</p>

Adapted from Wheeler, Edyth J. (2004). *Conflict resolution in early childhood: Helping children understand and resolve conflicts*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.

and receive care encourages them to think and act in a context of moral understanding. Lisa Goldstein has applied Noddings' work about a caring curriculum in schools to early childhood education.

Implications of Cognitively Oriented Theories

All these theories provide a picture of how both children and adults bring their thinking to bear on moral issues. Reasoning is not consistent across situations and conditions, however. For example, a child may reason at a more mature level about hypothetical issues than about ones that relate to his own self-interest. Furthermore, children are often able to comprehend reasoning at a higher stage with help than they are able to on their own. It is clear that the development of moral judging and reasoning can be stimulated by role-taking opportunities and positive social interaction (e.g., through community service). By providing children with opportunities to practice thinking at a higher stage, adults can facilitate children's moral development. This view is consistent with Lev **Vygotsky's** concept of the zone of proximal development and the practice of scaffolding of learning from an adult or a more capable peer.

Moral Competence of Children

Early childhood professionals have noted that children can sometimes show more competence in their moral thinking and actions than the theories about their moral thinking and perspective-taking typically describe. Consistent with these observations are current beliefs that children are more capable and learn in patterns that differ from those described by stage theories. Young children demonstrate compassion, empathy, kindness, and other aspects of prosocial concern that actually facilitates and nourishes their development of cognitive moral reasoning and action. At times their moral competence rises to the level of true altruism and moral leadership. This extraordinary moral competence is illustrated in the work of Robert Coles whose work offers insights into both what children may seem to know innately and what they learn from observing and listening to adults. He supports the idea that children can be more morally wise and aware than theories would suggest. For example, he records for us the moral strength, wisdom and forgiveness voiced by six-year-old Ruby Bridges as she passes through an angry crowd to enter her newly integrated school in Atlanta in the 1960s.

Cultural Context of Moral Development

Moral development takes place in every cultural community throughout history, but it is hardly an invariant process always looking the same. Quite the contrary. The processes of *moral socialization* have been shown to involve myriad alternative forms depending on how much the parenting figures choose to use physical punishment, verbal reasoning, love withdrawal, strict versus lenient control, involvement of extended kin and nonfamily authority figures, appeals to religion and to the supernatural, and negative sanctions such as ridicule, shaming, threats, and bribes, in their child-rearing techniques. Moreover, cultures vary greatly in their hierarchies of moral beliefs and values, with different groups providing various rankings of such values as honesty, obedience, loyalty, promise-keeping, sacrifice, physical bravery, abstinence, modesty, emotional restraint, and so on, as what is most important for a child to learn. According to critical perspectives

in early childhood, children's moral actions take place within a context of **culture** and family as well as community and classroom. It is important, therefore, for teachers to seek to avoid misreading or misinterpreting children's actions when confronting cultural diversity. For example, a teacher may discover that a child has taken more than her share of food as the bowl is passed around the classroom not because she is greedy or disregarding the rules of fairness, but because her parents expect her to try to get food to take home to her brothers and sisters. The moral conflict (for the child) is between the ideals of equality and fairness among school peers and the ideals of equality and fairness among siblings as well as of caring within the family. Implications for practitioners include recognizing conflicting moral expectations that children encounter in different cultural contexts (see also **Language Diversity**).

Implications for Supporting Moral Development

An awareness of the range of theories that explain children's moral thinking and action may help early childhood professionals in supporting children's moral development. Authoritative or democratic parenting and teaching styles allow adults to model moral reasoning (see also **Parenting Education**). Children can extend their moral understanding as adults provide scaffolding of moral reasoning. Both at home and in the classroom, adults can demonstrate perspective-taking, empathy, and caring. In a classroom setting, children can practice an ethic of care through a curriculum centered on themes of caring, such as helping others, or caring for the natural environment. Applying ideas about care-based morality, practitioners may make space for different approaches to moral decision making and integrate relationship concerns into their teaching about rules, justice, and fairness. Further implications include listening carefully to children's reasoning, respecting their moral competence, providing opportunities for expressions of their moral thinking, engaging families, and being responsive to cultural contexts of children's moral development. *See also* Families.

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Edyth J. Wheeler and Carolyn Pope Edwards

Development, Social

Fostering children's social development has traditionally been a high priority in early childhood programs. When children enter toddler, preschool, or kindergarten programs, they have to learn to navigate new and complex social situations with both children and adults. Thus, early childhood teachers typically spend a great deal of time and energy helping children learn how to regulate their emotions, understand others' perspectives, and initiate and maintain social contacts and relationships. This emphasis is not misplaced; a number of studies have shown that children with poor peer relationships in early childhood are at risk for later social and emotional problems and academic alienation and failure (Ladd, 1990). Over the past three decades research has identified specific skills and experiences that contribute to the outcomes of children's social development. These factors are associated with numerous implications for early childhood educational practice.

The quality of relationships between children and their teachers and parents plays a crucial role in children's social and emotional development. Those with a secure **attachment** to primary caregivers have the space and support to experience the full range of emotions, to learn culturally appropriate ways to express and regulate them, and to become aware of how other people feel and how relationships work (Sroufe et al., 1984). Conversely, children who are insecurely or ambivalently attached do not have a trusting relationship in which they can freely explore their emotions and fully develop their social awareness and skills. Most research related to attachment has focused on parent-child relationships, but Howes and Ritchie (2002) have shown how young children's attachments with their teachers affect their functioning in school and describe and advocate ways that teachers can foster secure attachments between themselves and their children.

Adults also consciously and unconsciously influence children's views of the social world by engaging in their own social relationships and modeling specific social behaviors (e.g., initiating contacts, resolving conflicts). Children absorb their families' social orientations (e.g., families with very active social lives versus those who are more independent or isolated) and their style of social functioning (e.g., different levels of emotional expressiveness in relationships). Parenting styles—sometimes conceptualized as authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive—may also be a factor. Authoritative parenting styles, which provide warmth, reasoning, and clear expectations and firm parental control, appear to be associated with higher levels of social competence. However, this link may not show up in all groups because economic pressures and specific cultural goals also influence parenting styles and their outcomes.

Aside from personal styles, family demographics, particularly socioeconomic status and racial and ethnic privilege or disadvantage, may also influence children's social development. Living in **poverty** and/or feeling marginalized, in and of itself, does not necessarily impair development, but resulting economic stress sometimes causes parental depression and family tensions which can spill over into conflicts with children and in turn make children more vulnerable to depression, low self-confidence, and poor relationships with **peers and friends** (McLoyd,

1998; Yeung, Linver, Brooks-Gunn, 2002). At the other end of the spectrum, racially privileged children from affluent families may develop attitudes of racial superiority and/or become caught up in competitive consumption, both of which potentially impair their social development. Rather than personal contentment and strong connections with others, privilege and material wealth often lead to a “hankering for more; envy of people with the most perceived successes; and intense emotional isolation spawned by resolute pursuit of personal ambitions” (Luthar and Becker, 2002, p. 1593).

In short, social development occurs in a many-layered context of family, school, community, and larger social and economic values and dynamics. However, within all groups and across many situations, children need to acquire a range of cognitive, emotional, and social skills in order to become socially competent in their particular context. They need to learn to express and regulate their emotions, empathize with others and understand their perspectives, initiate and maintain social interactions, and develop relationships with peers.

In terms of emotional competence, researchers have identified several components linked to **social competence**. First, children who are generally happy and enthusiastic tend to have more positive social encounters and are seen as more likeable by their peers. Second, those who understand emotions, both their own and those of others, are able to respond more appropriately and sensitively to peers and adults. Third, children who have a wide range of emotional expressions and are able to modulate them to fit the current situation can both generate excitement among their peers out on the playground (e.g., “help! help! the robbers are coming!”) *and* conform to classroom expectations (e.g., sit quietly at circle time or focus on academic work). In contrast, children who are emotionally “flat” have a difficult time engaging peers; those who are emotionally volatile and unpredictable may frighten their peers and sabotage their interactions (Sroufe et al., 1984).

Fourth, children who understand others’ perspectives and empathize with their feelings are also more competent socially. Children go through several phases of empathy development during the early childhood years, although the sequence and timing may vary across social and cultural contexts (Hoffman, 2000). Newborns typically cry reactively when they hear other babies cry, suggesting that humans are born with some innate ability to resonate with others’ emotional states. This ability is reflected in toddlers’ self-referenced empathy, responsiveness to others’ emotions based on the assumption that others feel the same way that they themselves do. As they get older, children learn to differentiate themselves from others and to read more subtle emotions. Preschoolers begin to understand that people may have their own information and ideas and react differently to the same event. Preschoolers also start to see how their own actions affect others (e.g., grabbing a toy makes the other child mad) and begin to learn how to resolve conflicts. As children enter and go through elementary school, they realize that they themselves are the objects of others’ ideas and feelings. This development enables children to be more considerate of others and better able to collaborate with other individuals and groups. However, this awareness can also make children self-conscious about what peers think of them, which may lead to rigid conformity to group norms and antagonism toward out-group members.

Teachers can support children's emotional competence by developing practices and activities that emotionally engage children, by encouraging honest and direct emotional expressions, and promoting awareness of others. These practices are sometimes associated with an emotional curriculum. Teachers can foster children's developing capacity to empathize and to understand and care about others' ideas and experiences by engaging them in discussions about how others feel or think whenever the opportunity arises (e.g., watching people engaged in different activities, reading stories that show people reacting to various situations, negotiating with peers about dramatic play roles, materials, and turn taking).

Beyond emotional development, social-skill development also plays into the development of social competence. Learning how to initiate and maintain social interactions and relationships can be a challenge in early childhood classrooms for a number of reasons. Young children tend to have short-term peer interactions and fluid friendships. A child may change "best friends" from day to day and even minute by minute. Early friendships are more likely to orient around shared activities or proximity and only later become contexts for support, intimacy and long-term loyalty and self-disclosure (Schneider, Wiener, and Murphy, 1994). Therefore, young children often have a wide range of casual friendships, particularly at the beginning of the school year.

The fluidity of relationships and the brevity of most interactions mean that children are frequently trying to make contact with peers. A number of studies have examined the effectiveness of different strategies that young children use to enter play situations (e.g., Ramsey, 1996). Collectively, these studies show that children are more successful entering groups if they observe and then fit into the ongoing play than if they explicitly ask to play, demand materials, or try to dominate the scene. Children's entry attempts are also affected by the current situation (e.g., how engrossed the host children are in their play) and the ongoing relationships among the children involved.

After children begin playing together, then they often struggle with maintaining the social interaction. Within the context of an ongoing interaction, children may move up and down among different levels of social participation (defined by **Mildred Parten** [1933] as unoccupied, solitary, parallel, associative, and cooperative). For example, parallel play may evolve into associative play and then shift back to parallel. Toddlers and young preschool children are more likely to engage in solitary or parallel play. Older preschoolers and kindergarteners have the skills to engage in complex and cooperative games and fantasies.

Teachers can support children's attempts to initiate and maintain social interactions through a **social curriculum**. They can help them start conversations with peers and "coach" them on how to initiate and continue interactions. They can also support peer interactions by designing space and selecting materials that are conducive to cooperative play (e.g., group vs. individual projects). Cooperative activities promote children's sense of *interdependence*, their awareness of others, and their flexibility. Moreover, they potentially foster friendships among children of diverse groups and different abilities (Kemple, 2004). Young children may be limited in their ability to understand others' cognitive perspectives, but they *can* learn how to coordinate their actions with each other in cooperative games. As they mature, children are able to collaborate on puppet shows, plays,

art projects, and stories, which require more conscious and sustained coordinated efforts. Many classroom routines can be done cooperatively, such as setting and clearing the snack tables, putting away toys, and putting on outdoor clothes.

Often interactions and relationships are disrupted by conflicts, which are an inevitable part of classroom life. Although often regarded as annoying interruptions, they force children to recognize different perspectives; balance their own wishes with those of others; manage anger and aggression; assess their actions' effects on others; be both assertive and respectful at the same time; and know when and how to compromise. Instead of trying to avoid or quickly resolve conflicts, teachers can use them to help children focus on others' feelings and needs and to work out joint solutions that (at least minimally) satisfy all parties.

Despite all of the efforts to support the development of their social awareness and skills, individual children's social competence varies considerably. Children are born with different characteristics that may affect the course of their social development (e.g., temperamental shyness, poor impulse control). The environment also influences children's social behavior (e.g., contentious vs. harmonious families, high/low levels of community violence). Thus, for a variety of reasons, children develop patterns of behaviors that are exhibited over many situations that in turn influence their social roles and how they are viewed by their peers.

A number of researchers (e.g., Asher and Hymel, 1981) identified four distinct social status groups in classrooms: *popular*: attractive, socially, academically, and physically skilled children, who are sought after by their peers; *rejected*: socially awkward or aggressive children who are avoided by their peers; *controversial*: lively high-impact children, who tend to test the limits and are liked by some children and disliked by others; *neglected*: self-contained children, who are content to be by themselves and have very little impact on the social life of the classroom. These categories have been useful for identifying dynamics in groups and individual children's needs. However, they should be used cautiously, because many children do not fit these categories, and all children vary across time and situation.

As these categories illustrate, some children have more successful social lives than others. These disparities often become apparent and entrenched, as social groups become more solidified over time and age. Many children also develop close long-term friendships that provide rich contexts to learn how to manage the ups and downs of peer relationships. However, playing with only one or two children is limiting and puts a lot of pressure on relationships that often fall apart, leaving both parties bereft. Moreover, children's friendships are sometimes exclusionary and often reflect divisions by gender, race, social class, **culture** and language, and abilities (Ramsey, 2004). Thus, a balance of close friends and a wider range of good friends is optimal. Vivian Paley's book *You Can't Say You Can't Play* is a wonderful resource for talking with children about exclusionary behavior, why it happens and how it affects everyone. In particular teachers need to encourage children to learn how to **play** and work with peers who, at first, may seem different (e.g., racially, culturally) from them. By observing these patterns and engaging children in conversations, teachers can encourage children to articulate and challenge the feelings and assumptions that are driving exclusionary and avoidant behaviors.

In sum, social development is a complex process that reflects children's developing cognitive and emotional capabilities and the personal and societal contexts of their lives. To foster this aspect of children's growth, teachers need to carefully observe individual children and the group dynamics in their classrooms and to develop activities and routines that support the capacities and needs of their particular group. Teachers also need to keep in mind how the larger social and economic contexts are influencing this important facet of children's development. *See also* Curriculum, Emotional Development; Development, Emotional; Development, Social; Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education; Language Diversity; Parenting Education; Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education; Violence and Young Children.

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Patricia G. Ramsey

Developmental Delay

While all children grow and change at their own rate, some children can experience delays in their development. Developmental delay is a descriptive term used in reference to an assessment of delay in infants and young children in one or more of the following areas: **cognitive development**, physical development (which includes fine motor and gross motor), communication development, social development, emotional development, or adaptive development. If a child is slightly or only temporarily lagging behind, that is not considered developmental

delay. Developmental delay is recognized by the failure to meet age-appropriate expectations that are based on the typical sequence of child development.

Significant delays in acquisition of developmental milestones in one or more developmental areas would indicate developmental delay and eligibility for **early childhood special education**. Parents usually seek an evaluation for developmental delay once their child fails to meet specific developmental milestones. In early infancy, indicators of developmental delay include a lack of responsiveness, unusual muscle tone or posture, and feeding difficulties. After six months of age, motor delay is the most common complaint. Language and behavior problems are common concerns after eighteen months. Although physical and cognitive delays may occur together, one is not necessarily a sign of the other. In addition, developmental milestones achieved and then lost should also be investigated, as the loss of function could be sign of a degenerative neurological condition.

Each state is responsible for developing more specific definitions of developmental delay, as well as criteria for determining eligibility for services for young children and their families residing in that state. Individual states have defined developmental delay variously as exhibiting a certain percentage of delay in one or more developmental areas, lower functioning than expected for chronological age, informed clinical judgment, atypical development, or a combination of some or all of these definitions. Those criteria measured by standardized assessment instruments are expressed in standard deviations from the mean; percent delay; number of months delay; or a developmental quotient (DQ), similar to an **intelligence quotient** (IQ) score. Criteria that are less quantifiable include atypical development as judged by a trained clinical professional or a multidisciplinary team.

Children who have a high probability of experiencing developmental delays include those who could be considered at established risk, biological risk, and/or environmental risk. Children who have genetic conditions or other medically diagnosed disorders that gives them a high probability of later delays in development have an established risk. Conditions such as **Down syndrome**, muscular dystrophy, and hearing impairment are examples. Children in this category are eligible for special education services by virtue of their diagnosis, regardless of whether a measurable delay is present. Children considered at biological risk have biological histories or conditions that make them more likely to develop a delay than children without the condition. Birth trauma, prematurity, failure to thrive, or complications during pregnancy all put a child at biological risk. The classification of young children who are at environmental risk is intended for children whose environments do not provide for their basic needs, including adequate nutrition, clothing, and shelter to provide psychological and emotional security. Children living in inadequate environments may experience mental, emotional, and/or physical disabilities. Developmental delays and disabilities are most likely to occur when a child is exposed to multiple risk factors, which may be biological, environmental, or both.

The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (IDEA) permits states and schools to use a noncategorical classification such as developmental delay for children ages 3 through 9. This term is used when a definitive diagnosis has not been made, but a child shows persistent delay across domains. In identifying infants

and toddlers, a general term such as developmental delay must be used. This law requires that young children with developmental delays receive **early intervention** services as needed. In addition, Part C under IDEA permits, but does not require, states to provide early intervention services for infants and toddlers who are at risk of developmental delays or disabilities but do not display any actual delays or activity limitations. *See also* Development, Emotional; Development, Social.

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Sharon Judge

Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood, A Taxonomy of

The following listing *briefly* describes a range of conditions that can affect young children. It should be noted that the perception of disability is a social phenomenon, and that the capacities of an individual child are affected by typical developmental processes, a variety of environmental influences, and biological risk factors. These labels are just that, labels that describe conditions but fail to adequately portray the unique personhood of each child. This taxonomy is organized by underlying conditions rather than by functional categories or environmental risk factors (e.g., lead poisoning, fetal drug, or alcohol exposure). It is intended to provide an overview. For specific diagnostic criteria consult *Diagnostic and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM IV) or the *Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood*. When working with children more detailed information on these conditions is required and should be used in concert with assessment of the child's individual strengths and needs as they relate to parental concerns, developmental domains and real world skills.

Sensory Disorders

Hearing impairment. Hearing impairment ranges from mild hearing loss to *deafness* which is defined as the level of hearing loss at which speech cannot be understood. Conductive hearing loss involves problems with the middle or outer ear often caused by infections such as *otitis media*. *Sensorineural hearing loss* occurs in the inner ear or auditory nerve and is typically more debilitating than conductive loss.

Visual impairment. Children with a variety of developmental disabilities are at greater risk for visual impairments such as *amblyopia* (lazy eye), *strabismus*—an imbalance of the eye muscles, and *cataracts*—opacity in the lens, as well as more normative conditions like myopia. A number of diseases can cause blindness that can severely affect other areas of development. *Retrolental fibroplasia* has been related to the use of high doses of oxygen to premature infants.

Sensorimotor integration disorders. This set of conditions affects a child's ability to integrate sensory input including that from vestibular and proprioceptive systems. *Tactile defensiveness* is an inability to tolerate textures, touch, or stimulation.

Neuromotor Disorders

Cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy results from brain lesions that result in mild to severe motor problems. A variety of prenatal and perinatal events (e.g., anoxia, RH blood incompatibility, birth complications, and heavy alcohol use) can contribute to the brain damage. Depending upon the location and nature of the lesion upper and lower limbs and sides of the body may or may not be affected.

Spina bifida. Spina bifida results from neural tube defects that interrupt transmission of neural impulses and motor development to the lower part of the body. Due to new surgical techniques the neural openings can now be corrected, limiting the motor disabilities as well as the accumulation of spinal fluid in the brain's ventricles that has the potential to affect cognitive functioning.

Muscular dystrophy. Muscular dystrophy, as opposed to cerebral palsy, is a progressive disorder resulting from a brain lesion. Its mechanisms are less well understood but are linked to a genetically transmitted metabolic disorder. The most common form is Duchenne's, which results in gradual disintegration of muscle cells.

Seizure disorders. Seizure disorders constitute a variety of conditions resulting from abnormal bursts of electrical activity that disrupt brain functioning. *Grand mal* seizures usually involve a loss of consciousness and alternate rigidity and relaxation of muscles. Focal seizures involve localized areas of the brain. *Myoclonic* seizures do not result in loss of consciousness and are characterized by involuntary jerking of the extremities. *Akintetic* seizures are opposite myoclonic in that they involve reduced muscle tone. *Petit mal* seizures are of short duration involving a brief lapse of consciousness without loss of muscle tone. Seizure disorders are often associated with other neurological disorders.

Congenital disorders. Only the most common of many hundreds of congenital disorders are described here.

Genetic Metabolic Disorders

Phenylketonuria is a metabolic disorder that, if left untreated, can cause brain damage and severe mental retardation. It can be identified with routine blood and urine screening at birth. *Cystic fibrosis* is also a metabolic disorder that leads to buildup of mucus in the child's lungs and vulnerability to infections. Death usually occurs by early adulthood. *Galactosemia* results in an enlarged liver. Children are susceptible to mental retardation, cataracts, and infections. *Congenital hyperthyroidism* is a hormone deficiency which, if left untreated, leads to floppy muscle tone and retardation. *Tay-Sachs disease* is a progressive

disease of the nervous system that affects infants after about six months of age and leads to severe debilitation and death by age 5.

Chromosomal Disorders

Down syndrome involves mild to severe mental retardation, low muscle tone, and distinctive physical features. In many cases cardiovascular problems are also present. *Cri du chat syndrome* results in microcephaly, smaller than average size, poorly formed ears. Children are usually mentally retarded. *Prader-Willi syndrome* results in moderate retardation, obesity, and low muscle tone. *Fragile-X disease* often results in retardation and behavioral disorders.

Cognitive/Learning Disorders

Mental retardation. Mental retardation is defined as significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning and can be attributed to a broad variety of both biological and environmental factors. Classification is typically arranged by IQ, with IQs of 50/55–70 being considered mild, 35/40–50/55 moderate, 20/25–35/40 severe, and below 20 or unspecified as profound. Labeling also requires evidence of limits on adaptive behavior. Typically in infancy and early childhood developmental delay is referred to, particularly in mild to moderate cases, based on measures of overall developmental functioning to avoid false prediction of retardation as well as stigma.

Learning disabilities. Learning disabilities can affect children of average or above average intelligence. They are characterized by specific inabilities in auditory and visual processes and are rarely diagnosed before school age. There is some evidence that premature and low birth weight babies have a higher incidence of learning disabilities when they reach school age.

Attention deficit disorder. Attention deficit disorder can be categorized in two ways, either with (ADHD) or without (ADD) hyperactivity. The two classifications are characterized by inattention, impulsivity and, in the case of ADHD, by a high activity level.

Social/Emotional Disorders

As with language, these social and emotional disorders may be secondary to other conditions. For example, self-stimulation and self-injurious behavior may characterize the behavior of some children with mental retardation, or social adjustment to a neuromuscular disorder may result in extreme shyness or oppositional behavior. On the other hand, a social-emotional disorder may be a primary disability with an etiology of its own.

Autism. Autism and an associated classification, *pervasive developmental disorder*, are characterized by severe delays of communicative and social development.

Autistic children often engage in repetitive and self-stimulatory behavior and inability to tolerate even small changes in their environment or schedule. Autistic children show a broad range of intelligence and adaptive abilities. Some evidence exists for physiological causes but it is not yet conclusive.

Attachment disorders. Attachment disorders are characterized by behaviors that indicate the lack of a strong emotional tie to a caregiver or caregivers. Such children are seen as avoidant or resistant to forming relationships. These disorders are seen as primarily induced by severe child maltreatment confinement to nonresponsive institutional care.

Behavior disorders. Oppositional and aggressive behaviors in young children are increasing. Typically the child's social environment (e.g., abusive, neglectful, or nonnurturant situations) has been blamed for these behaviors. However, the factors that enter into the equation that result in such disorders may be biophysical and temperamental as well as environmental. Increasingly, a portion of these children are being diagnosed with ADD/ADHD.

Social withdrawal/isolation. Some children are extremely fearful or withdrawn in social situations. Again, a variety of factors, both biological and environmental, can lead to these conditions. Conditions such as social phobias or selective mutism may be identified in the preschool years.

Communication Disorders

Speech and language disability is often associated with many of the other conditions listed here such as retardation, hearing problems, or autism. In some cases, however, language functions seem to be the primary issue of concern. Because of the importance of language functions in development, this primarily functional area is included as a distinct disability category.

Speech or phonological disorders. Speech and phonological disorders involve difficulties with the production of speech sounds. These often include problems with the nerves and muscles of the mouth, vocal cords, and breathing apparatus.

Expressive language disorders. Expressive language disorders are, in some cases, the result of lesions in the motor cortex responsible for language production. They can also be the by-product of a number of other biological and environmental risk factors. They are characterized by difficulty in using words.

Receptive language disorders. Receptive language disorders are those that affect the comprehension and production of language. Receptive aphasia involves damage to temporal language areas. As a result, not only language comprehension but also language production is affected. The understanding and production of language involves a broad set of abilities and hence these problems require assessment that isolates specific areas of skill.

Health-Related Conditions

Failure to thrive. The failure to gain weight within a normal range may be due to a number of factors that may include either an inability to provide sufficient breast milk or digestive problems in the infant. In some instances it has been related to neglect or ignorance of basic parenting practices.

Infections. The incidence of *rubella* is now rare, but in the past German measles during pregnancy resulted in children with sensory and cognitive impairments. Other viral infections such as *cytomegalovirus* and *herpes simplex* can cause severe disabilities. *Meningitis*, an infection of the tissue around the brain and spinal cord, can be due to a virus or bacterial infection and can cause a wide range of neurological problems.

Gastrointestinal. Many children with multiple or severe conditions have difficulty maintaining body weight and meeting basic nutritional needs. In addition they may also have *gastroesophageal reflux*, a condition in which the muscle that prevents food from backing up between the stomach and esophagus is weak. See also Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; Autism; Cerebral Palsy; Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

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John Hornstein

Developmental-Interaction Approach

The developmental-interaction approach represents a set of beliefs and values about teaching and learning for children as well as the adults who teach them. This approach to early childhood education is identified with **Bank Street** College of Education and is named for its salient concepts, including “the changing patterns of growth, understanding, and response that characterize children and adults as they *develop*; and the dual meaning of *interaction*, as first, the interconnected spheres of thought and emotion, and equally, the importance of engagement with the world of people, materials, and ideas” (Nager and Shapiro, 2000).

Rooted in the early years of the twentieth century, the developmental-interaction approach is associated with **Progressivism** and shares features with a democratic **pedagogy**, including an emphasis on humanist values and the belief that education provides an opportunity to engage in and create a more equitable democratic society. Lucy Sprague **Mitchell**, the founder of Bank Street College (initially known as the Bureau of Educational Experiments), was profoundly influenced by the thinking of John **Dewey** and other early Progressives such as Harriet Johnson, Caroline **Pratt**, and Susan **Isaacs**. In the conceptualization that

is now known as the developmental-interaction approach, school and society, democracy and education are inextricably linked. Developmental theorists such as Anna Freud, Erik Erikson, Heinz Werner, Jean Piaget, and Kurt Lewin, who saw development in dynamic terms and in social context, also contributed to the conceptualization of the approach. In more recent years the work of Lev Vygotsky and his followers has come to influence the understanding and expression of developmental-interaction.

This approach specifies a set of beliefs about the learner, learning, and teaching. The learner is understood as an active maker of meaning who is curious about the world in which she lives and actively engages with the physical and social world to make sense of it. As an advocate for children, the teacher studies how children learn and grow and strives to understand the communities in which they live. She forges a practice that integrates a deep and sophisticated knowledge of subject matter, an understanding of children and learning, and a passion for social justice. Together the teacher and children create a classroom community that promotes each child's cognitive, linguistic, affective, social, and physical development. The classroom provides a context for becoming a member of a community. School is a major part of children's lives and should provide equitable opportunities for children to build knowledge and skills while they are also experiencing pleasure, enjoying learning, and developing competence. Learning to respect others and resolve conflicts in positive ways are fundamental to the communal learning environment.

These ideas, values and beliefs guide rather than prescribe teaching. They provide a set of principles with which the teacher makes fundamental choices about subject matter content, methodology, and the physical and psychological environment of the classroom. Teaching requires a complex set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions with which to plan, implement, and assess curriculum and children's growth.

In the developmental-interaction approach, **social studies** provide the core of the curriculum. It is selected as a core curriculum because it concerns the relationships between and among people and their environments, both in the present and in the past. It provides an opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills within an experience of democratic living. Bringing her deep understanding of the subject matter together with her understanding of each individual learner, the teacher guides children's learning and the growth of knowledge by asking meaningful questions and selecting learning opportunities such as trips, activities, books, and other materials and resources. Children learn from their experience when they engage directly and actively with the environment and pursue questions that emerge from their observations, interests, and curiosity within a framework of connected opportunities that the teacher provides. The teacher is the key person, guiding children's inquiry, making connections to academic fields of study, and providing continuity in experiences to facilitate and enable learning.

The developmental-interaction classroom is a dynamic environment that encourages active participation, cooperation, and independence. It provides multiple and diverse opportunities for children to represent, express, and communicate their understanding. The individual is valued as a thinker and doer

and also as a social and emotional being who is an important part of the community of the classroom, her family, and her larger community. This understanding of the learner generates a broad understanding of **assessment in early childhood**. In the developmental-interaction classroom, assessment reflects an understanding not only of competence in basic skills and knowledge but also of how the learner makes sense of his or her world, the development of analytic capacity, and depth and breadth of knowledge in subject matter areas. Equally important is the teacher's assessment of the attitudes and characteristics of the learner in interaction with the environment, such as the ability to work both independently and collaboratively, to exercise initiative and to be a socially responsible member of the community.

The central tenets of developmental-interaction apply equally to the education of teachers. The **teacher education** program at Bank Street College is based on the conviction that teachers need experiences as learners that parallel the ways they will teach children. Becoming a competent teacher is tied not only to information but also to the ways in which teachers experience, internalize, and construct their growing knowledge and sense of self as a maker of meaning. Some principles that govern the education of teachers include the following:

- (1) Education is a vehicle for creating and promoting social justice and encouraging participation in democratic processes.
- (2) The teacher has a deep understanding of subject matter areas and is actively engaged in learning through formal study, direct observation and participation.
- (3) A sophisticated understanding of the development of children and youth in the context of family, community, and culture is necessary for teaching.
- (4) The teacher continues to grow as a person and as a professional.
- (5) Underlying practice is a philosophy of education that provides an organized set of principles for teaching and learning.

Developmental-interaction guides both the education of children and teachers. It does not provide a codified set of procedures, but rather presents a framework for the teacher's decision making concerning choice of content, methodology and the physical and psychological environment of the classroom. The teacher has the complex task of expressing these values and principles in planning and implementing curriculum, assessing curriculum and children's growth, and taking on the responsibility of growing as a professional. Together, teachers and children engage actively with the environment, expand their knowledge, and grow as members of caring, intellectually challenging and democratic classrooms. *See also* Advocacy and Leadership in Early Childhood; Classroom Environments; Development, Social.

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Nancy Nager

Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s) (DAP)

In the early childhood context the adjective “developmentally appropriate” means varying for or adapting to the age, experience, abilities, and interests of individual children within a given age range. The specific historical origins of the term are unclear, but it is likely that it originated within the field of developmental psychology, which has had considerable influence on the field of early childhood education. Manufacturers of children’s toys, clothing, furniture, and other materials regularly make judgments about what is developmentally appropriate when they alert consumers to the age group for which their product is designed. Early childhood educators often use the phrase, “developmentally appropriate,” when they describe materials, learning experiences, or expectations of children of varying ages.

Developmentally appropriate practice (sometimes abbreviated as DAP) is a short-hand phrase that has been widely used in the early childhood profession to describe ways of teaching young children that reflect knowledge of child development and learning, and that vary with the age, experience, abilities, interests, needs, and strengths of individual children. The term gained recognition and influence when the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) first published a position statement promoting such teaching practices (Bredekamp, 1987). Initially, many early childhood educators embraced the concept and the publication became the best-selling book in NAEYC’s history with more than 700,000 copies sold.

Within several years, however, the book and the concept of developmentally appropriate practice became the object of considerable criticism and discussion within the profession. The critique in the literature and during public forums created an excellent opportunity for debate within the field. In 1997, after several years of work, NAEYC issued a completely revised edition of the publication that attempted to address many of the critics’ concerns as well as more current research and theory (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997). NAEYC’s current position states the following:

Developmentally appropriate programs are based on what is known about how children develop and learn; such programs promote the development and enhance the learning of each individual child served.

Developmentally appropriate practices result from the process of professionals making decisions about the well-being and education of children based on at least three important kinds of information or knowledge:

- (1) *What is known about child development and learning*—knowledge of age-related human characteristics that permits general predictions within an age range about what activities, materials, interactions, or experiences will be safe, healthy, interesting, achievable, and also challenging to children.

- (2) *What is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child in the group* to be able to adapt for and be responsive to inevitable individual variation.
- (3) *Knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live* to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for the participating children and their families.

Furthermore, each of these dimensions of knowledge—human development and learning, individual characteristics and experiences, and social and cultural contexts—is dynamic and changing, requiring that early childhood teachers remain learners throughout their careers (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997, pp. 8–9).

History of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

All development occurs in social, historical, and political context, including the development of fields of practice and scholarship. The 1987 edition of DAP was written in response to two particular trends occurring in the last part of the twentieth century. First, NAEYC had just launched a national, voluntary **accreditation** system for high-quality early-childhood programs. The phrase “developmentally appropriate” was used throughout the accreditation criteria. Without further definition, the criteria were subject to widely varying interpretations by program personnel and validators making onsite visits for accreditation. A second motivation for the position statement was the trend toward what is referred to as a push-down **curriculum** in which primary-grade academic expectations and teaching practices such as whole-group, teacher-directed instruction were being moved down to **kindergarten** or even preschool. With increasing numbers of public schools serving four-year-olds, association leaders felt strongly that those programs needed guidance about what kinds of practices are developmentally appropriate for that age group.

The concept of developmental appropriateness seemed most relevant to early childhood educators in terms of thinking about the needs and characteristics of different age groups, so NAEYC produced a statement that addressed the issue across the full age-span of birth through eight years. For example, the level of independent functioning or social interaction expected of a two-year-old is, according to most child development research, quite different from that expected of a seven-year-old.

In the 1987 statement, developmental appropriateness was defined as having two dimensions: age-appropriateness, and individual appropriateness. The 1987 statement called for a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated experiences, and clearly stressed the value of **play** and child initiation. Perhaps most significantly, the document contrasted examples of appropriate and inappropriate practice for each age group. The decision to include negative as well as positive examples was momentous, generating considerable attention to the book. But the dichotomization of appropriate and inappropriate practice also created problems such as oversimplifying the complex act of teaching and leading some practitioners to either/or thinking in place of serious reflection.

Criticisms of the 1987 edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* are well documented (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997; Mallory and New, 1994). To summarize, they include: “1) the either/or oversimplification of practice; 2) overemphasis on child development and underemphasis on curriculum content; 3) the passivity of the teacher’s role, the failure to recognize the value of teacher direction; 4) lack of awareness of the significant role of culture in development and learning (white, middle-class bias); 5) lack of application for children with disabilities and special needs; 6) overemphasis on the individual child and underemphasis on relationships and social construction of knowledge; 7) naivete about the significant role of families” (Bredekamp 2001, p. 108).

The 1997 edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* attempted to address many of these concerns. NAEYC also developed a position statement in conjunction with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education on curriculum as a companion piece. In these documents, rather than viewing developmentally appropriate practice as a prescription that is found in a book, teachers are described as professional decision-makers; and the revised position statement includes a set of principles and guidelines for making decisions. The guidelines address the complexity of early childhood practice: creating a caring community of learners; teaching to enhance learning and development; constructing appropriate curriculum; assessing children’s learning and development; and establishing reciprocal relationships with families. To reflect the central role of culture in development, the actual definition of what is developmentally appropriate was expanded to include knowledge of the social and cultural context. To go beyond oversimplifications, the document challenges the field to move from *either/or* to *both/and* thinking.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Curriculum Content

Shortly after the 1997 edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* was published, leaders of the **International Reading Association (IRA)** criticized it for failing to reflect current knowledge about the importance of effective early **literacy** instruction in the early years. Noting that the position statement was never intended to outline specific content areas, NAEYC collaborated with members of the IRA and wrote a joint position statement, *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children* (Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp, 2000). This statement applied the definition of developmentally appropriate practices to a specific curriculum area: “Developmentally appropriate practices in reading and writing are ways of teaching that consider (1) what is generally known about children’s development and learning to set achievable but challenging goals for literacy learning and to plan learning experiences and teaching strategies that vary with the age and experience of the learners; (2) results of ongoing assessment of individual children’s progress in reading and writing to plan next steps or to adapt instruction when children fail to make expected progress or are at advanced levels; and (3) social and cultural contexts in which children live so as to help them make sense of their learning experiences in relation to what they already know and are able to do.” The position goes on to

say, “To teach in developmentally appropriate ways, teachers must understand *both* the continuum of reading and writing *and* children’s individual and cultural variations. Teachers must recognize when variation is within the typical range and when intervention is necessary, because early intervention is more effective and less costly than later remediation” (Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp 2000, p. 19).

Applying the concept of developmentally appropriate practices to a specific curriculum area, in this case early literacy, provided a model that NAEYC also used for **mathematics** in a joint position with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). Similar frameworks could be used in all curriculum content areas.

The Future of Developmentally Appropriate Practices

The subject of developmentally appropriate practice continues to be controversial within the field with some people calling for elimination of the term from the early childhood lexicon. Critics continue to challenge the construct’s almost total reliance on [improved and more culturally informed] child development theory and oversight of educational and curriculum theories. The concept has become highly politicized as well, with some government entities censoring its use in official publications. A position statement is, by definition, a political statement that addresses an issue of controversy. So it is not surprising that DAP generates controversy just as it attempts to resolve it. NAEYC’s leaders will determine the future of Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s) as a position statement and publication. The 1997 edition called for regular review of the concept and revised statements at least every ten years.

The future of developmentally appropriate practice (with lowercase letters) is more certain since it is likely that teachers, parents, and commercial product developers will continue to find it useful to vary experiences and expectations for young children with attention their age, individual characteristics, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. *See also* Academics; Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Sue Bredekamp

Developmental Systems Theories

Developmental Systems Theories are a family of conceptual models that promote a holistic view of individuals. According to this perspective, development is seen as a dynamic process where all components of the individual and the context interact in mutually influential ways. As such, this theoretical approach views the whole individual as “greater than the sum” of his or her parts. The study of development should not attempt to isolate or disengage individual components of the overall system.

A developmental systems perspective emphasizes the complex relationships that exist between individuals and their ecology, the contribution that people make to their own development, and the importance of viewing a person holistically and in his or her real-life contexts. This perspective has important implications for research and practice in the field of early childhood education and care. According to this theoretical perspective, the relationship between a child and his or her context (e.g. educational program) must be framed by the contribution of the child’s unique qualities to his or her development; in turn, the effects of a program have to be understood in the context of the developmental trajectories and the nature of the broader ecology of the children participating in the program. Thus, a developmental systems perspective provides an important framework for researchers and practitioners in the field of early childhood education.

The importance that these theories place on the *relationship* between an individual and the multiple levels that comprise his or her ecology, rather than the individual or the ecology alone, means that a person’s development is determined by fused (i.e., inseparable and mutually influential) relations among the multiple levels of the ecology of human development, including variables at the levels of inner biology (e.g., genes, the brain), the individual (e.g., temperament, cognitive style), social relationships (e.g., with peers, teachers, and parents), sociocultural institutions (e.g., educational policies and programs), and history (e.g., normative and non-normative events, such as elections and wars, respectively). The bidirectional relationship between the individual and the context (represented as individual ↔ context), and the multiple levels that are involved in development of this relationship, require that the person ↔ context system be viewed holistically. The continuous interrelation of all levels of the developing system, and how they change, is what constitutes development.

The dynamic (i.e., mutually influential) changes that exist across the developmental system create openness and flexibility in development and thus imply that there is a potential for plasticity (for systematic change) across life. The plasticity of development means that one may be optimistic about the ability to promote positive changes in human life by altering the course of individual ↔ context

relations. Furthermore, in comparison to perspectives that regard people as passive recipients of environmental stimulation or of the set of genes acquired at conception, viewing development as a matter of individual ↔ context relations suggests that each person is an important producer of his or her own development. Individuals, through their characteristics of physical, mental, and behavioral individuality, including their setting of goals and the actions they take to pursue their objectives, play an important role in determining the nature of these relationships, and hence, in influencing their own developmental trajectories.

The interaction between an infant and her mother illustrates this active agency of individuals. An infant with an easy temperament (e.g., an ability to rapidly adjust to new events and stimuli, positive mood, and regularity of biological functions such as eating and sleeping) is likely to elicit positive, attentive responses from her parent that in turn, promote further, positive behaviors from the child and ultimately, support a healthy, adaptive parent ↔ child relationship. In this case, the behaviors of both the child and her parent have influenced the behaviors of the other person in the relationship, and the child is co-shaping the course of his or her own development. By underscoring the active contribution that each individual has on his or her developmental trajectory, the developmental systems perspective brings the importance of individual differences to the fore. As each individual interacts in a unique way with his or her context, he or she may develop differently from other individuals.

Therefore, from the developmental systems perspective, development is not seen as a simple, linear, cause-and-effect process, but as a complex, flexible process where the actions and intentions of the individual play a causal role. Moreover, this role occurs within the actual ecology of human development. Developmental systems theories place a strong emphasis on ecological validity, that is, the importance of understanding people in settings representative of their real-world settings, as opposed to ecologically unrepresentative laboratory settings.

Thus, a strength of developmental systems theories is that, rather than concentrating on a limited aspect of a person's functioning, or focusing on people in contrived situations, it focuses on the diversity and complexity of human development as it takes place in the contexts within which children actually spend their lives—a focus brought to the fore by six decades of theory and research by Urie **Bronfenbrenner**. Accordingly, from this perspective, educational interventions should seek to change the relationship between the active individual and his or her complex, multilevel context; such work should not seek to enhance the educational process or its outcomes within the contrived laboratory context but, instead, should seek to enhance the positive connections among the classroom, school, family, community, faith institution, and other settings in which children live. Furthermore, such interventions may enter the developmental system at any level of the **ecology of human development**, for example, at the individual, school, family, community, cultural, or social policy level, and still be envisioned to be of potential effectiveness due to the plasticity of the bidirectional relations among all levels of the system.

Thus, developmental systems theories have important implications for early childhood education and care. In particular, given the principle that exists within this perspective about the possibility for positive change, one may maintain that

it is feasible to identify individual \leftrightarrow context relations that may promote at least some positive transformation in any developmental characteristic. In fact, the ideas of plasticity and of optimism within the developmental systems perspective provide a theoretical foundation for the fundamental goal of educational programs: to promote positive change among all children. Furthermore, given that this perspective suggests that positive change is achieved by fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between the individual and his or her context, programs, educational and otherwise, must remain flexible so that a maximum fit will be created between the diversity (of developmental trajectories) characterizing the children, families, and communities involved in a program. Indeed, to provide the most appropriate services to any specific child, it is important to identify both the individual and more generic characteristics of each child and, as well, to seek understanding of the connections existing between this individuality and the multiple (and themselves diversely constituted) levels of the ecology in which the child is embedded.

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Jason Almerigi, Steinunn Gestsdottir, and Richard M. Lerner

Dewey, John (1859–1952)

A leading representative of the progressive movement in the United States and a founder of the philosophical school of Pragmatism, John Dewey was one of the most influential American educational reformers of the last century.

Dewey was born and educated in Vermont. He held several teaching positions between graduation from the University of Vermont in 1879 and entrance to Johns Hopkins University in 1882. After receiving a Ph.D. in 1884, Dewey became a philosophy professor at the University of Michigan, where he married Alice Chipman after she received her doctorate in 1886.

Dewey developed his reputation as a pragmatic innovator while heading the Department of Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy at the University of Chicago between 1894 and 1905. His 1896 establishment of its Laboratory School for children aged four to twelve years, with its curriculum based upon themes and projects, helped pioneer the movement known as **Progressive Education**. Dewey resigned from the University of Chicago in 1904, apparently because of disagreements with its administration. He was then a professor in the Philosophy Department of Columbia University until retirement in 1930.

Dewey's concepts became widely recognized through his books, which included *School and Society* (1899), *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902), *Democracy and Education* (1916), *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), and *Knowing and Education* (1949). After his first philosophical essay in 1882, he had about 150 publications. In addition to articles in professional journals, he contributed to *Harper's*, *The Nation*, and other popular magazines. He was active in many professional organizations, as an officer and a conference participant. Dewey also traveled and lectured in Europe, Japan, and China.

John Dewey had a significant influence upon today's preschools. When the sub-primary class at the University of Chicago Laboratory School opened in 1896, it was for children aged four to six years and based upon Friedrich Froebel's original system. It was not called a **kindergarten** because many American kindergartens had adopted structured activities and abstract symbolism during the previous two decades. Dewey credited Froebel with recognizing that individuals are coordinated units from birth onward, taking in experiences from the outer world, organizing them, and relating them to their inner life. His vision of this laboratory class for young children was to test the validity of using activities related to home and community-oriented themes. He took an active role in the kindergarten and child study associations and was elected president of the National Kindergarten Association (1913–1914).

A major contribution to early childhood education was Dewey's mentoring of Patty Smith Hill, beginning in the early 1890s and continuing after she took a position at Teachers College in 1904. When she formed the committee that evolved into the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), he was a supporter. His students included many pioneers in early childhood education, including Lawrence Kelso Frank, Lucy Gage, and Alice Temple.

John Dewey believed that democratic child-centered classrooms and interaction with their communities would prepare the youngest citizens for living in a democratic society. He established the basic principles of today's early childhood education and of the importance of student-centered education at all grade levels.

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Dorothy W. Hewes

Direct Instruction Model

Direct Instruction is both a theory and a model of teaching practice that proposes to accelerate learning through explicitly teaching young children basic

skills which then can be generalized to higher-order processes. The model of direct instruction was first developed by Siegfried Engelmann and Carl Bereiter in 1966 through their work on intensive instruction for economically disadvantaged preschoolers; and is based on principles of **behaviorism**. In 1969, Engelmann (and coauthors) contracted with Science Research Associates (SRA) to publish an arithmetic and reading curriculum based on the theories under the brand name DISTAR (Direct Instructional System for Teaching and Remediation). Further dissemination of the model occurred when Engelmann partnered with Wesley Becker and together they created the Engelmann Becker Corporation (also known as the Association of Direct Instruction [ADI]) and the National Institute of Direct Instruction (NIFDI). These organizations continue to research and publish Direct Instruction (DI) materials as well as provide schools with training and program support. Direct Instruction curriculum materials continue to be developed and are marketed through SRA, although the brand name of DISTAR is being used less and less in favor of the simpler Direct Instruction title.

Direct instruction is a teaching model currently designed for use with preschoolers through eighth graders. Curricula have been published for reading, language arts, and **mathematics**, and typically include a sequence of carefully scripted lessons which teachers work through with children in small, ability-based groups. Instruction is generally fast-paced including nine to twelve questions per minute that the children answer in unison. Each lesson lasts about a half hour, and 80 percent of the time is used to review old material with the remaining 20 percent dedicated to introducing new concepts. Information that is under study is constantly tested through oral questioning by the teacher to identify student understandings and repeated to increase the retention of the material.

The approach is based on the assumption that, if explicitly taught specific basic skills, children will generalize these to new learning experiences. For example, instead of teaching the spelling of every word, “children who learned 600 word parts called ‘morphographs’ and three rules for connecting them could spell 12,000 words. Children rehearse the 600-word parts and three rules to a level of automaticity that allows them to spell the 12,000 words with ease” (Grossen, 2005). The theory also postulates that these skills must be clearly, simply and directly taught in a carefully sequenced manner that breaks bigger skills into smaller component tasks that children can master more quickly. Direct Instruction also holds curriculum constant so as to elucidate what difficulties the student brings and then specifically teaches the missing skills. Lastly the model advocates using scientifically tested curriculums that are designed to anticipate common errors and provide support for a wide range of children.

The program was evaluated as part of the massive federal Follow Through Project that analyzed multiple educational programs for the ability to teach basic skills, cognitive skills, and affective skills. Direct Instruction was the only model in this project to achieve consistently positive results in all three categories. However, the model faces strenuous critique from the teaching community and is often criticized for being too rigid and focusing solely on academic skills. Most recently, current trends toward accountability and high-stakes testing are making the model more attractive for some schools.

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Lindsay Barton

Disabilities, Young Children with

According to the CDC (2006), “Developmental disabilities affect approximately 17% of children younger than 18 years of age in the United States.” Children typically progress through a series of developmental stages and milestones as they age. Disruption in these stages or a delay in reaching a milestone can be a sign that a child has a developmental delay or disability. Often a parent may wonder if their child has a developmental delay or disability when they notice differences in their child’s development. However, because of the variability in rates of development and the relevance of developmental stages and milestones within cultural and ethnic groups, physicians and specialists are often reluctant to label a child as having a disability unless there is an obvious physical difference. In the absence of physical indicators or biological markers of disability, health care professionals depend upon assessment of a child’s development, parent reports, behavior, and functional abilities for diagnosis.

There are many diagnostic labels that describe disabilities in young children. Unfortunately, the language used to communicate differences often pathologizes children to the point that they are known by their label rather than by their personalities, preferences, and passions. Many children are identified as having a disability at birth and others are diagnosed later when differences in development become more evident. Birth defects are a primary factor in disabilities in young children. “Birth defects affect about one in every thirty-three babies born in the United States each year. They are the leading cause of infant deaths, accounting for more than 20% of all infant deaths. Babies born with birth defects have a greater chance of illness and long-term disability than babies without birth defects. Developmental disabilities affect approximately 17% of children younger than 18 years of age in the United States” (CDC, 2006). Spina bifida, for example, is present at birth and is generally easily diagnosed based on clear physical indicators.

Other forms of developmental disabilities are not necessarily associated with birth effects. Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), although being identified earlier, are often not labeled until after the age of three when discrepancies in the quality of motor, communication and social skills are more easily assessed. Likewise Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is often diagnosed after a child enters school because difficulties with attention and following

routines become apparent in the school context. Other disabilities such as **cerebral palsy**, cognitive disabilities, **learning disabilities**, and speech and language delay are diagnosed at different ages depending on the **culture**, child, family, access to health care, and the competency of the health care professionals.

Increasingly children under the age of five are being diagnosed with **mental health** issues. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) states there are numerous causes: exposure to environmental health risks such as high levels of lead and other toxic substances; exposure to **violence**, such as witnessing or being the victim of physical or sexual abuse, drive-by shootings, muggings, or other disasters; stress related to chronic poverty, discrimination, or other serious hardships; and the loss of important people through death, divorce, or broken relationships (SAMHSA, 2006). Identifying and addressing mental health issues in infants and young children depends upon the competence and knowledge of health care professionals and access to early services and supports.

There are numerous risk factors associated with developmental delays and mental health issues. They include maternal health status, pre- and postnatal history including low birth weight, maternal mental health, **socioeconomic status**, genetics, head trauma, exposure to heavy metals and toxins, and **child abuse and neglect**. If these factors are known by physicians and practitioners, there are several screening and diagnostic instruments and procedures that can document and monitor developmental delay. Given the understanding of the effectiveness of **early intervention** (Guralnick, 2005), there have been numerous efforts to improve early screening and detection of disabilities and/or metabolic disturbances that can lead to disabilities.

Early screening of children occurs in hospitals and physician offices by sampling a child's blood or giving tests specific to sensory and motor systems. The Apgar Scale which is given immediately after birth measures the degree of prenatal asphyxia based on observations of an infant's neuromotor status (Apgar, 1953). A low Apgar score is correlated with poorer developmental outcomes. Newborns are also screened through routine metabolic, endocrine and hearing test. Phenylketonuria (PKU) and hypothyroidism, if untreated, are associated with intellectual disabilities. Research has indicated that (1) there are unacceptable rates of underdetection of common other developmental problems in primary care due to lack of training and information about developmental screening tools; inadequate time; inadequate reimbursement; and unfamiliarity with community resources (e.g., Glascoe, 2003; Pelletier and Abrams, 2002); (2) underdetection of vision problems is a serious concern when 79 percent of preschoolers and even greater numbers of younger children *are not being screened* for amblyopia (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2002), and fewer than half of three-year-olds never have their vision screened using current methods (Hartmann et al., 2000); and (3) early detection of hearing loss is also problematic when only half of children with hearing loss are identified through checklists/questionnaires commonly used by practitioners (AAP, 2003). These gaps in identification frequently result in preventable developmental delays that often impact learning and have lifetime consequences for children and their families.

For children with developmental delays and disabilities, family support should be initiated as well as early services and supports. Early family support is critical for supporting high-quality child-family interactions, family orchestrated experiences that affect language and relationships, play, choice of toys and child care; and health and safety (Dunst, 1995; Guralnick, 2005). Early interventions and supports have proven to be effective in remediating some of the risk factors and preventing the progression of others. Research suggests the earlier the initiation of services and supports, the more positive the child outcomes. Hebb (1949) and Harlow (1958) believed that early experience and education had an impact on the development of the brain and its functions. These theories about the potential of influencing cognition were supported by Vygotsky (1962) who posited the idea that the brain could be influenced by external events. This ongoing process is referred to as neural plasticity.

Once a child has been identified as having a disability or considered at risk, there are several intervention programs available to support the child. **Head Start**, for example, was established in the United States in the 1960's, followed by Early Head Start, as a way to help disadvantaged children and their families overcome the influences of **poverty** and deprivation. It is based on the theory that education and intervention can positively affect child and parent outcomes. There are several major studies that have documented the effectiveness of early intervention. The Milwaukee Project, for example, sought to reduce the impact of "mental retardation" on infants and toddlers and their parents. Mothers who were labeled as intellectually disabled were taught how to stimulate and interact with their babies; and the infants also participated in an early intervention program. At the end of the study, infants in the experimental group scored thirty-five points higher on the Stanford Binet intelligence test. Martin, Ramey and Ramey (1990) reported on the **Abecedarian Project**, which sought to remediate the effects of psychosocial disadvantage. Both children and their parents were involved in the intervention. Children in the experimental group who received intensive (five days per week/all day) intervention had higher test scores at age 3 and were less likely to be retained in school. These gains were retained over time. Children who had mothers who were labeled more significantly disabled had the greatest developmental outcomes. Other studies, including Project Care (Wasik et al. 1990) and the Infant Health and Development Program (Ramey et al., 1992) provided in-home supports and documented that the intensity of involvement in intervention was positively correlated with better developmental outcomes.

In 1987, the U.S. Congress amended the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** to encourage states to begin educating infants from birth through three years of age and supporting their families in the natural context of their home. Prior to this amendment, referred to as Part H, state education efforts focused on children from three to twenty-one years. This amendment is now referred to as Early Intervention and is Part C of IDEA. Ramey and Ramey (1996) articulate six principles of Early Intervention that emanate from the research literature. They include the importance of: developmental timing, program intensity, direct versus intermediate provision of learning experiences, program breadth and flexibility, individualized differences in program benefits, and ecological dominion and

environmental maintenance for development. In a longitudinal study of families who participated in Part C and received early Intervention programming, Bailey et al. (2004) found that families reported several positive outcomes including parents' improved feelings of competence, improved sense of support and higher expectations for their child's future.

Guralnick (1998) summarized literature on early interventions and commented that early intervention programs generally result in positive outcomes for children. They prevent decline and in many situations improve overall functioning of children. Much of the success depends, as noted by Ramey and Ramey (1998), on the nature of the program and the characteristics and circumstances of the child and family. In sum, developments over the past thirty years in social policy, program design, and research all have created a much stronger context for young children with disabilities, enhancing the likelihood of their optimal development within families and community-based programs alongside their non-disabled peers. Today, such children attend day care with early services and supports; are served in early intervention and **early childhood special education programs** operated by public preschool programs, community agencies, and the public education system. *See also* Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; Brain Development; Environmental Assessments in Early Childhood Education.

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Division for Early Childhood (DEC)

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children is a nonprofit, membership organization designed for individuals who work with or on behalf of children with special needs, from birth through age 8, and their families. Founded in 1973, DEC is dedicated to promoting policies and advancing practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays and disabilities.

With 5,000 members worldwide, DEC is the largest professional membership organization dedicated to **early childhood special education**. DEC members are practitioners, administrators, family members, and policymakers. DEC represents a number of disciplines including early childhood special education, **early intervention**, speech therapy, psychology, health care, physical and occupational therapy, and others directly involved in the care and education of young children with disabilities and other special needs.

DEC and its members are committed to advocating for policy, planning and best practice in prevention and intervention. DEC supports full access for young children with special needs and their families to natural settings and service delivery options. Respect for family values, diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and family circumstance are integral considerations in DEC's prevention and intervention efforts and DEC actively promotes parent-professional collaboration in all facets of planning, designing, and implementing early childhood intervention services.

As a membership organization, DEC supports those who work with, or on behalf of, infants and young children with special needs and their families in a variety of settings including preschool special education classrooms, home-based early intervention programs, Head Start and Early Head Start, child-care programs, hospital-based programs, and others. DEC promotes collaboration and communication among organizations, practitioners, and family members, innovations in research and the development of new knowledge, dissemination and use of information about research, resources, best practices and current issues, and professional development through an array of activities and strategies. With a network of more than thirty state and provincial Subdivisions, DEC offers numerous opportunities to network with colleagues and participate in professional development activities in support of early childhood special education.

DEC is a community of professionals, parents and others who are interested in building partnerships at the local, state/provincial, national and international levels to promote high-quality services for young children and their families. Key activities include providing (1) professional development and other training opportunities; (2) two quarterly journals—the *Journal of Early Intervention* and the *Young Exceptional Children*; (3) position statements and concept papers on topics of interest to practitioners, parents, researchers, and policymakers; (4) nearly twenty products including books, monographs, videos, and DEC's most important resource—*DEC Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide*

for Practical Application, a resource for identifying evidence-based practices for young children with disabilities and other special needs; (5) an international annual conference; (6) advocacy efforts including a Children's Action Network to communicate with the field and regular policy updates; and (7) opportunities for professionals and parents to share expertise via electronic communication, publications, forums, conference presentations, and journal articles.

Further Readings: DEC Web site: www.dec-spед.org.

Sarah A. Mulligan

Documentation

To “document” is “to support (an assertion or a claim, for example) with evidence or decisive information” (American Heritage Dictionary, 1994). It is this relationship between *assertion* and *evidence* that makes documentation distinct from observation. While many early childhood educators assume that documentation is a new pedagogical practice derived from **Reggio Emilia**, there is actually a long history of documentation in early childhood education in the United States. “Throughout the history of early childhood education in North America, teachers and caregivers have collected evidence of the growth in children’s knowledge, skills and dispositions. Lucy Sprague **Mitchell**’s Bureau of Educational Experiments, founded in 1916 and later to become **Bank Street College**, emphasized the importance of teachers not only observing children but also recording children’s language, feelings, projects, and daily happenings” (Mitchell, 1950). Early nursery and preschool teachers routinely collected children’s drawings and paintings and recorded verbatim children’s comments and conversations. These attempts to capture important information about the growth of individual children were used to guide children’s experiences. The term documentation appears even earlier in North America when associated with **assessment** and used as evidence for drawing conclusions about performance. The use of the term has become more popular as interpreted and used by the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Teachers *document* by observing, making notes, photographing, recording (audio or video), collecting children’s work, and/or taking dictation. The drawings, paintings, writing samples, photographs, anecdotal notes, transcripts, and recordings are called *documentation*.

Today, most early childhood programs do some form of documentation, although its use varies widely. Some programs simply make brief anecdotal notes on children’s development; some develop extensive portfolios on children’s development; and some use documentation as the primary source for professional dialogue and planning. Regardless of the source behind a particular interpretation of documentation, an important part of the documentation process is the time spent thinking, or reflecting, about the meaning of the evidence. Because of the diversity of documentation in North America it is helpful to use the purposes for documentation as a way to organize thoughts about it. These purposes include guiding instruction, assessing individual children, studying **pedagogy**, and enhancing communication about the educational process. The purpose of the

documentation determines how the documentation is collected, thought about, and shared.

Documentation for Guiding Instruction

Documentation used for guiding instruction is typically collected while the learning is happening and reflection on the documentation is usually immediate. Teachers listen, observe carefully, and examine children's work. They may make anecdotal notes, take digital photographs, and collect and carefully examine children's products such as drawings and constructions which are produced during the day or over a short period of time. This documentation is often referred to as raw or unprocessed documentation and has been a common practice in nursery schools and laboratory schools. It is usually not copied, framed, or carefully displayed but used immediately. What the teacher and his or her colleagues gain from this documentation is a sense of where the learning experience might go next, what materials and resources might be helpful to introduce, and how to shape their own interactions with the children. Documentation for guiding instruction enables teachers to be more productive and effective. Teachers may or may not choose to share this raw documentation with others, including parents and members of the school community.

Documentation for Child Assessment

Another purpose of documentation is the assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an individual child. Individual child assessment enables the teacher to be sure that each child is progressing. The most appropriate type of assessment for the young child is authentic performance assessment, that is, assessment based on activities in which children engage on a daily basis (Meisels, 1993).

Authentic performance assessment relies on the collection of good quality evidence or documentation. This type of documentation includes children's work samples collected into a portfolio, photographic or video recordings, and observations captured in anecdotal notes. There is often an individual developmental checklist which the teacher uses to document the growth and development of skills over a period of time.

Documentation to provide evidence needed for reliably assessing children's progress, for meeting accountability requirements, or for program evaluation is usually collected as part of a formal process with specific domains or areas of learning documented throughout the year. Teachers examine and discuss the documentation at prescribed intervals and record their conclusions sharing the documentation and their conclusions with parents.

Documentation for Studying Pedagogy

Documentation also provides insight into the teaching and learning process. When documentation is collected and studied for the purpose of understanding this process, it is sometimes called pedagogical documentation (Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence, 1999). Pedagogical documentation is a major component of the

philosophy of the schools of Reggio Emilia, where, as shown in the excerpt below, reflection and in-depth documentation shapes their pedagogy and is the major source of professional growth and development.

... we place the emphasis of documentation as an integral part of the procedures aimed at fostering learning and for modifying the learning-teaching relationship. (Rinaldi, 2001)

An excellent example of pedagogical documentation in U.S. schools and centers is *Rearview Mirror: Reflections of a Preschool Car Project* by Sallee Beneke (1998). Through this captivating documentation of the exploration of a car by children in a community college child-care center, the reader participates in the reflections of the teachers, the parents, and the automotive center staff where the project took place. The documentation enables the teachers to examine and then convey the pedagogical decisions made during the project and to share the value of the learning experiences with multiple stakeholders, including the children themselves.

In North America there have been a number of research and study projects that have focused on using documentation for studying pedagogy based on the principles of Reggio Emilia (Cadwell, 2003; Fu, Stremmel and Hill, 2001). One of the most prominent is Making Learning Visible (MLV). The MLV project began in 1997 as a collaboration between Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Municipal Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers of Reggio Emilia, Italy. MLV sought to draw attention to the power of the group as a learning environment and the power of documentation as a way in which students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community could see how and what children are learning.

Another project which focused on using documentation to inform pedagogy is the Professional Learning Communities Project of the Chicago Metro Association for the Education of Young Children funded by the McCormick Tribune Foundation. This project involved collaboration with early childhood centers to develop professional learning communities within centers and to introduce and support the use documentation as a tool for examining and improving practice. *The Power of Documentation: Children's Learning Revealed*, an exhibit on documentation and professional learning communities in the midwest, was developed by Chicago Children's Museum and is now a traveling exhibit.

Documentation for Communication

Another purpose for documentation is to provide a vehicle for communicating about what is happening in early childhood programs. In fact, one of the primary reasons that many Italian early childhood programs began to utilize documentation strategies was to increase parent interest in contemplating and discussing children's experiences. As practiced in many classrooms in Italy as well as elsewhere, this communication around documentation can occur between staff members, with children, with parents about what is happening in children's classrooms and how their child is learning, and with the members of the greater

community to share what is happening in the classroom and to develop respect, understanding, and support of the work that is done there. This use of documentation is becoming more widespread as early childhood programs are becoming more accountable to funding agencies and to parents, each eager for information on the growth in children's knowledge, skills, and dispositions within the early childhood classroom.

Value of Documentation

Documentation requires time and commitment of an early childhood program staff. Although there are many ways to gather evidence about children's learning such as test scores and checklist of performance on specific goals, the open process of documentation as interpreted by many early childhood educators has unique advantages. Documentation provides insight into students' thought processes. An understanding of how a child came to a particular conclusion can show significant learning progress and creative problem solving even when the "answer" is officially wrong. Documentation also gives the audience an appreciation for how children think, and how that thinking is different from adult cognition. Teachers as well as parents and other adults can gain a better understanding of the challenges and questioning that characterize children's thinking. Children's learning dispositions, such as being persistent and curious, can be captured and built upon. Steps in a problem-solving sequence can be recorded. These thought processes and the skills of assessing a problem, designing a solution, trying it out, and persisting to find a better solution are, in fact, a major part of many disciplines of study. Documentation strategies help teachers to directly capture and then reflect upon these thinking processes, alone and with others.

Documentation also encourages teachers to look at knowledge and skills beyond those that can be assessed verbally or in paper and pencil tests. Documentation enables teachers to capture children's learning as they construct models, build in the block area, play in housekeeping, or conduct an experiment in science. Observing and collecting children's work encourages teachers to be open to diverse ways of learning and to focus on unique ways that children approach learning tasks (Gardner, 1993).

Professional Learning Communities

Interest in examining children's work has been the focus of several school improvement movements in public education in North America, including kindergarten and primary school planning. One of these is the professional learning communities (Eaker, Dufour, and Burnett, 2002). Documentation is an integral part of many professional learning communities. A professional learning community is typically defined as a group of teachers at a school or center who meet to examine individual children's work and play, and—based on their observations—create ways to extend each learning. The practice of examining work is an integral part of the teaching-learning process; the children learn more and the teachers become seasoned professionals. In such settings where documentation practices are common, the teaching staff regularly meets to present and share documentation

collected from the classrooms; and to debate its significance for their teaching. During this sharing the teacher typically poses questions for brainstorming and discusses the children's interest and skills reflected in the documentation. Other colleagues also share ideas, for example, on how to help the child achieve deeper knowledge or more complex skills in that area and possible next steps. Finally, the group typically incorporates some of the ideas into the following week's curriculum planning. Over time, the group develops a shared set of effective teaching strategies, in effect revealing the contributions of documentation to adult as well as child learning.

Documenting sometimes results in publishing or sharing documentation of the children's work such as a display of a project, a media show, or a book about an experience. These products, however, aren't the primary purpose of documentation but rather a product of the documentation and reflection process. Most programs that use documentation extensively use it to enhance the teaching and learning process.

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Judy Harris Helm

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can be defined as abuse or threats of abuse between adults in families. However, many researchers include all types of violence that a child witnesses as domestic violence. Children typically witness domestic violence that

occurs between partners, and most often abuse involving a male abusing a female (Groves, 2002; Osofsky, 1997, 2004). Other forms of domestic violence include both partners as aggressors when abuse occurs (Smith Slep and O'Leary, 2005). Research also indicates that when domestic violence involves spousal abuse of the mother, the mother frequently will be abusive toward her children. Children also have often been found to be victims of abuse at the hand of a male when the male is the aggressor toward the female.

Domestic violence has become an increasing problem round the globe with 40 percent of women in many countries reporting spousal or intimate partner abuse (Kishor and Johnson, 2004). An estimated three to eight million children witness violence each year. Every year the incidence increases, and the effects can be devastating for young children (Kearney, 1999). Most aggression consists of pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, and hitting. However, some incidents are life threatening. In 2003, the number of domestic violence incidents that resulted in death in the United States was 1,300 in 2003, and internationally this number is not known due to difficulty in calculating and obtaining data.

Witnessing violence or exposure to violence can have a negative impact on all people, but young children are particularly vulnerable (Osofsky, 1997). Many children bear the brunt of not only witnessing violence between adults but also being the victims of domestic violence and living in communities where violence becomes a part of everyday life (Osofsky, 2004). Exposure comes in many forms that include the media, spousal abuse in homes, and violence in neighborhoods. Eventually, for many children violence comes to be seen as the norm.

As a result of witnessing **domestic violence**, infants and toddlers may exhibit limited speech. Other behaviors that develop include regression to behaviors that a child had already mastered, new fears, clinginess, and behavior changes. Infants and toddlers may develop problems with sleeping, temper tantrums, and difficulty separating from caregivers. Young children, particularly infants and toddlers, react both to the trauma that they experience and the trauma that the adults they are attached to experience. In situations where spousal abuse is occurring, young children quickly become victims even when they are only witnessing violence and are not the physical recipient. The inability to develop trust and autonomy can be difficult for children who have witnessed domestic violence or are victims. Future relationships with other adults and peers can be impaired due to the inability to trust others.

The effects of trauma associated with domestic violence can impact a child at any age. Trauma-specific symptoms can interfere with normal growth in development. Children, particularly preschoolers who witness violence at a young age, may have a tendency toward violence and impulsivity. A child may be hypervigilant and overly sensitive to sounds or noises. Many of the effects of domestic violence can interfere with the ability to learn and develop. Preschoolers may also experience difficulty separating from caregivers, fearful avoidance reactions, and provocative behavior. Some preschoolers exposed to violence have sleep difficulties and withdraw socially (Osofsky, 2004).

It is difficult to determine what a young child will remember. What is known is that children remember traumatic events better than other events in their lives.

They have more difficulty with the sequence of events and their memories may be more fragmented, but the memories are there (Groves, 2000). The effects of the trauma also depend on the extent of the emotional involvement of the child, the level of their language development, and the security that the child has to an attachment caregiver. The length of the **violence** also plays a role in how detrimental it is to the child (Groves, 2002).

Chronic exposure to violence can lead to intense rage that can lead to aggressive behaviors. Some children become frightened by the violence and develop passive tendencies. Many children exposed to violence have difficulty in the area of academic performance. Many children seem to develop symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in response to witnessing violence. Symptoms that can develop include repetitive traumatic dreams, cognitive confusion, and re-enactment of the traumatic event through play and intrusive memories or thoughts (Groves, 2002).

There are many strategies that teachers and other adults can use to support young children who have been exposed to domestic violence. Children learn from what they see so it is important for teachers and other adults in their lives to model appropriate behaviors. Children who have witnessed or been victims of domestic violence need to learn ways to problem solve difficult situations and handle conflict and anger (Kearney, 1999). These children need consistency and structure for their behavior and logical consequences for not following rules that do not involve physical punishment. Many of these young children have difficulty developing trust in relationships, so they need consistent attention and appropriate affection.

Adults involved with children who have witnessed domestic violence should create an emotionally safe environment for the child. The child's classroom and home should be a place to which the child feels that he or she can come without anxiety. Cooperation should be encouraged rather than competition. Listening to what the child has to say is one factor that will help to promote trust (Kearney, 1999). Children should also be alerted to changes that will be taking place in the classroom or at home so they know what to expect. Allowing children to complete activities in a variety of ways and letting them know that there is no one way to do something is important to accepting the child and building self-esteem.

Osofsky (1997) argues that teachers should receive specific training on how to deal with children who have been exposed to domestic violence. Preservice teachers should receive college level training, and teachers in the schools should receive in-service training on a regular basis. Training should cover three content areas: development and the effects of domestic violence on children at various ages; resilience and coping in children; and helping teachers focus on their own reactions and experiences with domestic violence.

Teacher training should include exposure to the general development of children and how domestic violence can affect children at each stage of development. Discussions of how children's development can regress as well as how to talk with parents about sensitive issues should take place with teachers. Teachers should be trained on how to file a report of abuse or neglect and to talk with children about a violent incident. Teachers should also receive information about conflict resolution and mediation skills.

Child resilience is another important component of training for teachers and other staff who work with young children. All children will respond differently to domestic violence, and research on resilience presented during teacher training can facilitate understanding this concept. Some children are able to cope better than others and if teachers have an understanding of this, it can counteract teachers' feelings of hopelessness (Osofsky, 1997).

The third component of the training should provide teachers with self-awareness concerning their own feelings and reactions to domestic violence. The topic can be emotional and overwhelming, so it is important to allow teachers permission to discuss how they feel with others and seek support from colleagues and supervisors when dealing with domestic violence issues in the classroom (Osofsky, 1997).

Communities that work together to respond to domestic violence by linking services to help victims and families can make a difference on the impact of the violence. Multidisciplinary teams consisting of mental health providers, police, and educators and early childhood educators can contribute to responding early and working with the family as a system rather than as isolated individuals (Osofsky, 2004).

In order to help victims of domestic violence, prevention and intervention are important for reducing the short and long-term effects on young children. Early referral is an important factor and can make a difference in the intervention process in a child's life. As soon as a child has been exposed to a traumatic event, referral to intervention services can help the child to begin to process information and make sense of feelings. Ensuring that children feel safe is an important element that should be in place before effective interventions can occur (Osofsky, 2004).

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Cathy Grist Litty

Down Syndrome

Down Syndrome is a developmental disability resulting from a chromosomal abnormality. It is the most common chromosomal disorder, occurring in approximately one out of every 800 to 1000 births. In the United States, approximately 5,000 children are born with Down Syndrome each year. Furthermore, it is widely believed that with the increasing number of women postponing childbirth, the number of children born with Down Syndrome will rise dramatically over the next decade or so.

The description (and hence the name) of this syndrome is attributed to John Langdon Down, an English medical doctor, who wrote about it in his monograph entitled, *Mental Affections of Childhood and Youth* (1887). However, it was Jerome Lejeune, a French physician, who confirmed the condition as a chromosomal abnormality in 1959. The disorder was commonly referred to as mongoloidism (due primarily to the facial features of those affected by the disorder). Down Syndrome is now considered the more widely accepted and appropriate name for the disorder.

Individuals with Down Syndrome evidence a common set of physical characteristics, including low birth weight, short stature, low muscle tone, a flat-appearing face with a small nose and upwardly slanting eyes, skin folds on the corners of the eyes, an oversized tongue in relation to the size of the mouth, misshapen, low-set ears and small ear canals, broad short hands with only one crease on the palm, short fingers, hyperflexibility in the joints, and a large space between the great and second toes (sometimes referred to as a sandal gap).

The cause of Down Syndrome, also known as Trisomy 21, appears to be related to the age of the mother and is associated with a malfunction in human cell division. This can occur in one of three ways. The most common malfunction is a process known as nondisjunction, where, after cell division, there is an extra chromosome (or significant portion thereof) at the 21st chromosomal pair in every cell. This may occur before or at conception and accounts for approximately 95 percent of all cases of Down Syndrome.

A second and much less common cell division malfunction is called mosaicism. This results when the nondisjunction occurs after fertilization of the ovum and during early cell division. In this case, the extra chromosome at the 21st pair occurs in some cells but not others, yielding a pattern of cells, some with forty-six chromosomes and some with forty-seven chromosomes, much like a mosaic. Mosaicism accounts for 1-2 percent of all cases of Down Syndrome.

The third cell division malfunction resulting in Down Syndrome is also rare and usually occurs by chance. It is called translocation. In translocation, a piece of the 21st chromosome separates during cell division and attaches to another chromosome. The result is the normal set of forty-six chromosomes, but additional genetic material from chromosome 21 in each cell. Translocation accounts for 3-4 percent of all cases of Down Syndrome.

A suspicion of Down Syndrome is often made at birth based on the presence of one or more of the physical characteristics commonly associated with the syndrome. However, confirmation of the diagnosis requires karyotyping, that is, arranging the chromosomes under a microscope in order to group them by size, pattern, and shape; and to count them. Through this process, the extra number 21 chromosome can be found.

Down Syndrome is a disorder that is found in all racial and ethnic groups and across all socioeconomic levels. The incidence is greatest in older mothers, although in about 5 percent of cases, Down Syndrome originates with the father. Doctors can often estimate the risk that a pregnant woman will give birth to a baby with Down Syndrome. This estimate of risk, usually carried out between fifteen and twenty weeks of gestation, is based on a number of factors, including the amount of certain substances (alphafetoprotein, human chorionic gonadotropin,

and unconjugated estriol) in the mother's blood. The age of the mother is also a risk factor in that the incidence of Down Syndrome increases with older women. However, 70–80 percent of children born with Down Syndrome are born to mothers under the age of 35. Further, a woman who has already had a child with Down Syndrome has a 1 percent chance of having another child with Down Syndrome. The screening process, along with a sonogram, is about 60 percent accurate in detecting a fetus with Down Syndrome.

Three pre-natal tests can be used to more reliably determine the presence or absence of Down Syndrome in the unborn fetus. Chorionic villi sampling (CVS) can be conducted as early as eight to twelve weeks' gestation. Amniocentesis is usually performed between twelve and twenty weeks' gestation. Percutaneous umbilical blood sampling (PUBS) is performed after twenty weeks. All three procedures extract tissue from the uterus for analysis and carry a risk of miscarriage. These tests, however, are 98–99 percent accurate in diagnosing Down Syndrome in the unborn fetus.

There are a number of medical conditions associated with Down Syndrome, including greater risk for heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, and leukemia. In the early twentieth century, a child born with Down Syndrome would likely not live beyond age 10. With the discovery of antibiotics, such a child's life expectancy doubled. Treatments for the characteristic medical conditions (i.e., heart defects, leukemia) associated with Down Syndrome have improved both life expectancy and health for those affected. Further advances in medical research continue to improve outcomes for individuals with Down Syndrome and its related medical conditions, and today many individuals with Down Syndrome live well into their fifties and beyond. However, it is still uncertain as to why individuals with Down Syndrome are at greater risk for these medical problems.

Down Syndrome is a developmental disability and individuals with Down Syndrome require a variety of therapeutic interventions (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy) to address some of the characteristics of the disorder. Those affected with Down Syndrome also have varying degrees of mental retardation. **Early intervention** services and inclusive high-quality early childhood education have proven to be invaluable strategies to promote each child's optimal development.

The passage of critical federal legislation has had a profound influence on the quality of life for individuals with Down Syndrome. The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (first enacted in 1975 as P.L. 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act and most recently reauthorized in December 2004), along with other landmark legislation (the 1975 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act known as Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) have articulated the clear expectation that children and adults with disabilities, including Down Syndrome, have the right to access meaningful opportunities in education, housing, and employment; and to participate as fully as possible in their communities alongside individuals without disabilities.

Relevant provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), contained in Parts B and C, specify that children from infancy through age 21 are entitled to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. These provisions encompass early intervention, early childhood,

school, and vocational preparation programs; and presume that education and support services will be made available in inclusive settings.

Today, it is not only possible but desirable that children with Down Syndrome live, grow, and learn with their families and peers in their communities. For more information contact the National Down Syndrome Society at the following address:

National Down Syndrome Society
666 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
www.ndss.org

Further Readings: Down, John Langdon (1887). *Mental affections of childhood and youth*. London: Churchill; Lejeune, J., R. Turpin, and M. Gautier (1959). Le mongolisme. Premier exemple d'aberration autosomique humaine. *Annales de génétique* 1, 41-49; Selikowitz, Mark (1997). *Down syndrome: The facts*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press.

Stephanie F. Leeds

Drug Abuse. *See* Parental Substance Abuse

E

Early Care and Education Programs, Administration of

In keeping pace with labor market trends, the demand for child care and early education services during the past two decades has surged. Data reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2003 shows there are more than 2.3 million preschoolers who receive care in “organized facilities” such as child-care centers, preschools, or federally funded **Head Start** programs. These organized programs come in all shapes and sizes, and differ according to philosophy, mission, service delivery mode, and legal auspices. While most are subject to regulation at the local and state level, program-licensing standards vary widely among jurisdictions, making it virtually impossible to describe their practices with a taxonomy that can be universally applied.

Program Types

A frequently used method for classifying early care and education programs is by funding source—public or private. Examples of publicly funded programs include state-prekindergarten programs housed in public schools, federally funded Head Start programs, military-sponsored programs, and local parks and recreation programs. Privately funded programs may be sponsored by social service agencies, hospitals, independent proprietors, corporate partners, or faith-based organizations. Over the past few years, the line between public and private funding has blurred as more and more early care and education programs have blended funding from multiple sources, both public and private.

Early childhood programs may also be classified according to their legal structure—for-profit or nonprofit. For-profit programs may be independent proprietary centers, partnerships, corporate chains (e.g., KinderCare, La Petite Academy), or employer-sponsored (e.g., Bright Horizons Family Solutions). Non-profit programs may be independent or associated with a social service agency, community organization, institution of higher education, or hospital.

Programs also differ in the nature of their services, the clientele they serve, and their philosophical orientation. They may operate part day or full day, part year or year round. They may serve infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or school-age children before and after school. And they may emphasize different educational philosophies and curricular approaches such as **Montessori**, **High/Scope**, or **Reggio Emilia**.

Administrative Roles and Functions

Because the range of program models and governing auspices is so broad, a discussion concerning the administration of early care and education programs befittingly places the program administrator as the focal point. The nomenclature referring to program administrators is varied and includes *director*, *manager*, *principal*, and *supervisor*. The most common designator is center or site director.

Just as variations in the organizational structure of early childhood programs span a wide range of possibility, program administrators likewise assume roles that encompass a spectrum of functional accountability. Generally, the breadth of roles assigned to administrators is tied to the size and governing auspice of their program. Some administrators work at a single site and are responsible for all policy and procedure decisions of their programs while others are employed in more layered settings where policy is set by a governing board, management group, or government entity.

In a large program that serves many families, the administrator may oversee the work of an administrative team including assistant directors, educational coordinators, office assistants, bookkeepers, and food service personnel. In a small program, the administrator usually has direct involvement in day-to-day tasks such as record keeping, visitor reception, meal preparation, and supervision of teachers. In fact, many directors of small programs also teach, spending a portion of their workday in the classroom.

Directing different types of programs requires varying levels of administrative sophistication, and the scope and complexity of the administrative role certainly affects the repertoire of competencies needed to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the early care and education organization. Administrating early care and education programs includes both leadership and management functions. Leadership functions relate to the broad view of helping an organization clarify and affirm values, set goals, articulate a vision, and chart a course of action to achieve that vision. Management functions relate to the actual orchestration of tasks and the setting up of systems to carry out the organizational mission.

Administrator Competencies

The administrator's role in an early care and education program is both central and complex. One way to understand the range of competencies needed to administrate a program is to look at the task performance areas that encompass the director's role. Core competencies identified as essential for effective early childhood program administration fall into ten knowledge and skill areas (Bloom,

2000). These are not discrete categories; there is conceptual as well as practical overlap.

Personal and professional self-awareness. Effective administrators are reflective practitioners keenly aware of the variables that impact their sense of personal and professional fulfillment. They grasp adult and career development theory and are able to apply it in their professional interactions. They also understand how to flex their leadership style to accommodate the personality typologies, dispositions, and work styles of diverse teaching and support staff.

Administrators are routinely called upon to resolve ethical and moral dilemmas. In these cases, they draw on their own awareness of the beliefs, values, and philosophical convictions on which their programs stand and evaluate different courses of action in relation to the profession's code of ethical conduct. They are able to articulate a philosophy of management, set personal goals to reduce stress and avoid burnout, and develop strategies to help staff achieve a balance between personal and professional obligations.

Legal and fiscal management. Early childhood programs are essentially businesses, and successful administrators function much like the unit managers of their corporate counterparts. They are savvy financial managers who possess skill in budgeting and cash flow management. They are knowledgeable about bookkeeping methods, accounting terminology, and bank relations. They are well informed about federal, state, and local sources of revenue and seek out grant-writing and fundraising opportunities.

Additionally, effective administrators work with legal counsel to ensure organizational compliance with the many regulations that govern early childhood programs such as licensing standards, building codes, and laws relating to health and occupational safety. They have a working familiarity of legislation relevant to contracts and negotiations, insurance liability, and labor law. In their professional relationships with families, administrators regularly encounter situations that require their facile understanding of confidentiality, child protection, and antidiscrimination laws pertaining to the services provided by their programs.

Staff management and human relations. Early childhood programs are labor-intensive operations and people are the essential ingredient in delivering high-quality services to children and their families. Successful administrators understand the importance of cultivating trusting relationships. They hire, supervise, and motivate staff to high levels of performance. They implement strategies based on their understanding of group dynamics, individual communication styles, and techniques for conflict resolution. They are adept at relating to board members and staff of diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.

Through their command of different supervisory and group facilitation styles, effective administrators exercise skill in consensus building and team development through shared decision making. They mentor those they lead and are

committed to staff performance appraisal methods that foster program growth through an individualized model of staff development.

Educational programming. Leadership is central to the role of early childhood administrators. They must be knowledgeable about current curriculum models and **assessment** practices that are consistent with quality indices and are antibias in nature. They design and implement programs that are appropriate for the ages and developmental levels of the young children in their care. They implement grouping practices that support the inclusion of children with special needs and ensure continuity and stability for all children. Effective directors are aware of the benchmarks for high-quality programming such as program **accreditation** and are committed to meeting those standards.

Program operations and facilities management. The facilities that house early care and education programs play an important role in supporting the relationships and interactions that take place within their bounds. Effective administrators plan and design learning environments based on the principles of environmental psychology and child development. They know how to furnish and maintain safe, inviting, and developmentally stimulating environments that accommodate the diverse needs of children and adults.

The early childhood administrator's knowledge and skill in establishing program policies and procedures helps ensure their centers meet state and local regulations as well as professional standards pertaining to the general health and nutrition of children and the occupational safety of program staff. This understanding also provides for efficient inventory control systems and well-thought-out emergency and risk management procedures.

Family support. In addition to providing for young children, many early childhood programs place a parallel emphasis on **parent education** or other forms of outreach to families. Such a family-responsive approach often means that the services of a program extend beyond the walls of the center facility. To effectively carry out their responsibilities, directors must rely on their understanding of family systems, parenting styles, and cross-cultural diversity. They embrace parents as valued partners in the educational process and implement program practices that support families of diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Marketing and public relations. Early care and education programs are business enterprises and no enterprise can be sustained without a stable clientele and a steady influx of new customers. Successful administrators are strategic marketers whose programs profit from effective promotion, publicity, and community outreach activities. Their business plans are designed to attain maximum enrollment. In all that they do, effective directors communicate their program's philosophy and promote a positive public image to parents, business leaders, public officials, and prospective funders. They conduct routine assessments to determine community needs and promote linkages with local schools. Their programs are promoted to the public on paper, through broadcast media, and over the Internet

through attractive brochures, Web sites, handbooks, newsletters, press releases, and carefully placed advertising.

Advocacy. *Advocacy* is a natural outgrowth of administrative leadership, since early childhood program directors have firsthand exposure to the needs and concerns of the children, families, and the communities they serve. Effective administrators are persuasive advocates for their cause and know how to explain issues with clarity and eloquence. They are cognizant of legislative processes, social issues, and public policy affecting young children, their families, and program staff. They know how to evaluate program effectiveness by identifying organizational problems, gathering data to generate alternative solutions, and applying analytical skills to the solution of those problems. In addition, they initiate community collaborations for efficient and cost-effective service delivery and mobilize others to advocate for better child and family services.

Oral and written communication. In both writing and speaking, effective early childhood administrators know how to synthesize complex information and communicate cogently and succinctly to a variety of different audiences. This ability requires mastery of the mechanics of good writing for organizing ideas, grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as well as effective oral communication techniques for establishing rapport, active listening, and voice control. Administrators function in an environment where opportunities abound for putting their communication skills into practice, whether it be through informal and formal written correspondence, an article contributed for journal publication, a formal presentation to a board of advisors, or a workshop presented at a professional conference.

Technology. The vast majority of early care and education programs today use computer technology to streamline administrative processes. The marketplace is replete with vendors who have developed administrative software offering turnkey solutions for a wide array of applications such as monitoring child admissions data, enrollment and attendance records, and staff scheduling. They offer financial management tools to support revenue tracking, banking, payroll, disbursements, and the preparation of regular financial statements. Additionally, some third-party software programs aid marketing efforts by tracking prospect inquiries and managing a program's waiting list.

To make the most of these technology resources, effective early childhood program administrators possess a working knowledge of computer hardware and software and are skilled users of word processing, spreadsheet, data management, and presentation applications. Their use of Internet technology fosters even greater efficiency via timely e-mail communication or by availing their programs to quality-enhancing online resources that strengthen daily practices, professional development, and advocacy initiatives.

The Link—Administrator Qualifications and Program Quality

Most administrators of early care and education programs have been promoted to their positions because of exemplary performance as classroom teachers. Few

have had specialized training in leadership or program management before assuming their positions. Few states require any administrative training for directors as a prerequisite for the position. For many directors, their own experience in the form of learning while doing (the “trial and error” approach) is what they rely upon to build administrative competence. Others put together a patchwork system of course work and in-service **professional development** to acquire the knowledge and skills they need. While approximately 75 percent of directors have baccalaureate degrees, directors with a specialized degree in early childhood leadership or management are rare.

Strong evidence has accumulated that directors of early care and education programs are the “gatekeepers to quality,” setting the standards and expectations for others to follow (Bloom, 1992). In a number of powerful ways the director influences the climate of a center both as a workplace for the teaching staff and as an educational and nurturing environment for young children. Without quality systems in place at the organizational level, high-quality interactions and learning environments at the classroom level cannot be sustained. The knowledge and skill of the administrator and his or her commitment to ongoing professional development have a profound impact on the quality of services a program can deliver.

Not surprising, survey data support the notion that many early childhood administrators enter their administrative roles with little or no preparation for the job. Only one-half of directors indicate that their perceptions matched reality when they assumed their current job and just one-fourth say they were well prepared for their new role (MTCECL, 2003). Equally troubling, only 12 percent of programs indicate they have a formal leadership succession plan in place. Those programs were more likely to be associated with a for-profit chain or a for-profit employer-sponsored program.

A mounting body of research has confirmed that the director’s level of formal education and specialized training are two of the strongest predictors of overall program quality. Years of directing a child-care center, on the other hand, is not a potent predictor of overall program quality. Pretests and posttests of teaching practices and overall organizational climate in the centers of directors who have participated in leadership training has shown significant improvement compared with directors who have not participated in such training. The evidence is compelling; leadership training not only improves administrators’ self-efficacy and perceptions of themselves as leaders, it also results in demonstrated improvements in the quality in their centers (Bella and Bloom, 2003).

Current Issues Confronting Early Childhood Administrators

Historically, the field of early childhood has always been closely tied to changes in society. Like a barometer, early care and education programs respond to changes in the social, political, and economic climate of the country. In addition to growing demand, several major trends represent new challenges for today’s early childhood program administrator. These trends impact the way all programs conduct their business, regardless of services provided, agency affiliation, or governing auspices.

Emphasis on quality and accountability. Greater demands for accountability are creating additional pressures for quality assurance evaluation and performance management systems that monitor, document, and report on center efficiency and quality of care.

Welfare-to-work legislation. Federal initiatives are putting more parents into the workforce. These newly employed adults not only add to the demand for quality child care but also require different kinds of support and service relationships.

Shortage of qualified early childhood staff. Staff turnover and retention issues continue to plague early childhood programs. Finding qualified staff who are caring, motivated, and committed to early childhood as a career remains a challenge.

Increased competition for financial resources. Competition for adequate levels of funding is demanding greater entrepreneurship and innovation and more intense linkages and integration between social service delivery agencies and early care and education organizations.

The increasing complexity of the external environment has elevated the need for strong leadership in the administrator's role. The trend toward blended funding streams, coordinated delivery systems, community-based planning, collaborative data collection, service delivery networks, and other systemic changes has created demands on early childhood administrators for knowledge and skills not previously needed. More than ever, the field of early childhood education needs program administrators who are willing to make a serious commitment to the profession and to their ongoing personal and professional development to achieve the goal of providing high-quality services to children and their families. *See also* Classroom Environment; Antibias/Multicultural Education; Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs; Teacher Certification/Licensure.

Further Readings: Bella, Jill, and Paula J. Bloom (2003). *Zoom: The impact of leadership training on role perceptions, job performance, and career decisions*. Wheeling, IL: The McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University; Bloom, Paula J. (1992). The child care center director: A critical determinant of program quality. *Educational Horizons* 70 (Spring), 138–145; Bloom, Paula J. (2000). How do we define director competence? *Child Care Information Exchange* (March), 13–18; Culkin, Mary, ed. (1999). *Managing quality in young children's programs—The leader's role*. New York: Teachers College Press; Hearron, Patricia F., and Verna Hildebrand (2003). *Management of child development centers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education; Kagan, Sharon L., and Barbara Bowman, eds. (1997). *Leadership in early care and education*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children; McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership (2003). Leadership transitions—what do directors experience? *Research Notes* (Fall), 1–2; U.S. Census Bureau (2003). *Who's minding the kids? Child care arrangements: Spring 1999 (PPL-168)*. Available online at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/child/ppl-168.html>.

Early Child Development and Care

Early Child Development and Care is a multidisciplinary publication that serves psychologists, educators, psychiatrists, paediatricians, social workers and other professionals who deal with research, planning, education and care of infants and young children.

The journal provides English translations of work in this field that has been published in other languages, and original English papers on all aspects of early child development and care. Published eight times per year by Routledge, the journal also contains book reviews, conference reports and other items of interest. For more information, please visit <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/03004430.asp>.

Roy Evans

Early Childhood Connections Journal of Music- and Movement-based Learning

Early Childhood Connections Journal of Music- and Movement-based Learning is a quarterly publication focusing on best practices, current theories, and applied research influencing the field of early childhood music education. Guided by a belief in the fundamental contributions of music and movement to healthy growth and development, this journal posits an eclectic approach that entertains multiple stances and curricular approaches. Issues are often thematic and have included topics such as Music and **Autism**, Musical Parenting, and Children at **Play**. First published in 1995 by the Foundation for Music-based Learning, *Early Childhood Connections* includes invited articles, book and research reviews, and peer-reviewed submissions from a wide variety of writers; music educators and researchers, psychologists, developmental specialists, teacher educators, professional musicians, and parents have all been featured. Worldwide views are represented in International Perspectives issues that appear almost annually, often including papers delivered at global conferences. For more information, see www.ecconnections.org.

Lori Custodero

Early Childhood Education Journal (ECEJ)

The mission of *Early Childhood Education Journal (ECEJ)* is to provide an international forum in which to share information, insights, research, and policy with implications for early childhood educators worldwide. *Early Childhood Education Journal* is a peer-reviewed, scholarly, and interdisciplinary journal that publishes original articles written by professionals with a shared commitment to the education and care of young children. Articles selected for publication in *Early Childhood Education Journal* represent a skillful blend of theory, research, and practice. Published six times per year, *Early Childhood Education Journal* is available in print format as well as electronically archived issues of the journal (full text and fully searchable). Guidelines for authors and instructions for obtaining a free sample copy are posted on the journal's homepage

at <http://www.kluweronline.com/issn/1082-3301>. Additionally, the publication uses a sophisticated and completely electronic system of manuscript submission and review called Editorial Manager© (<http://ecej.edmgr.com/>). The sponsor of the journal is Kluwer Academic Publishing, the second-largest professional publisher in the fields of science, technology, and medicine in the world.

Mary Jalongo

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

Among the most frequently utilized environment rating scales (ERS) in the United States are four developed by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer at the FPG Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. These scales, each designed for a different segment of the early childhood field, are described below.

- **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), Updated (2005), T. Harms, R.M. Clifford, and D. Cryer:** This scale is designed to assess group programs for preschool-kindergarten-aged children, from 2 1/2 through 5 years of age. The total scale consists of forty-three items and is commonly referred to as the ECERS-R. The ECERS-R is also available in Spanish.
- **Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R), Updated (2006), T. Harms, D. Cryer, and R.M. Clifford:** This scale is designed to assess group programs for children from birth to two-and-a-half years of age. The total scale consists of thirty-nine items and is commonly referred to as the ITERS-R. The ITERS-R is also available in Spanish.
- **Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS), (2006), T. Harms, D. Cryer, and R.M. Clifford:** This scale is designed to assess family child-care programs, usually conducted in a provider's home. The total scale consists of thirty-eight items. This scale is a revision of the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS, 1989).
- **School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS), (1996), T. Harms, E.V. Jacobs, and D.R. White:** This scale is designed to assess group care programs for school-age children, 5 to 12 years of age, during out-of-school time. The total scale consists of forty-nine items, including six supplementary items for programs enrolling children with disabilities. It is commonly referred to as the SACERS.

Two resource books that provide in-depth information in text and photographs—*All About the ECERS-R* (Cryer, Harms, and Riley, 2003) and *All About the ITERS-R* (Cryer, Harms, and Riley, 2004)—are available to help with interpretation of the scales.

All four scales have the following features in common:

- They have items to evaluate: Physical Environment; Basic Care Routines (including health and safety practices); Curriculum; Interaction; Schedule and Program Structure; and Parent and Staff Support.
- The scales are suitable for use in evaluating inclusive and culturally diverse programs, half day and whole day programs.
- The scales have proven reliability and validity.
- They use the same format and scoring system, a 7-point Likert scale with indicators for (1) inadequate, (3) minimal, (5) good, and (7) excellent.

Following is a sample item from the ECERS-R.

32. Staff-child interactions*

<i>Inadequate</i>	<i>Minimal</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
1.1 Staff members are not responsive to or not involved with children (e.g., ignore children, staff seem distant or cold).	3.1 Staff usually respond to children in a warm, supportive manner (e.g., staff and children seem relaxed, voices cheerful, frequent smiling).	5.1 Staff show warmth through appropriate physical contact (e.g., pat child on the back, return child's hug).	7.1 Staff seem to enjoy being with the children.
1.2 Interactions are unpleasant (e.g., voices sound strained and irritable). *	3.2 Few, if any, unpleasant interactions.	5.2 Staff show respect for children (e.g., listen attentively, make eye contact, treat children fairly, do not discriminate).	7.2 Staff encourage the development of mutual respect between children and adults (e.g., staff wait until children finish asking questions before answering; encourage children in a polite way to listen when adults speak).
1.3 Physical contact used principally for control (e.g., hurrying children along) or inappropriately (e.g., unwanted hugs or tickling).		5.3 Staff respond sympathetically to help children who are upset, hurt, or angry.*	

**Notes for Clarification*

Item 32. While the indicators for quality in this item generally hold true across a diversity of cultures and individuals, the ways in which they are expressed may differ. For example, direct eye contact in some cultures is a sign of respect; in others, a sign of disrespect. Similarly, some individuals are more likely to smile and be demonstrative than others. However, the requirements of the indicators must be met, although there can be some variation in the way this is done.

1.2. Score this indicator "Yes" only if many unpleasant interactions are observed throughout the observation or during one part of the observation. If only one or two brief instances are observed, and most interactions are neutral or positive, score "No."

5.3. Sympathetic response means that staff notice and validate a child's feelings, even if the child is showing emotions that are often considered unacceptable, such as anger or impatience. The feelings should be accepted although inappropriate behaviors, such as hitting or throwing things, should not be allowed.

A sympathetic response should be provided in most, but not necessarily all, cases. If children are able to solve minor problems themselves, then teacher response is not needed. The observer needs to get an overall impression of the response of the staff. If minor problems persist and are ignored or if staff responds in an unsympathetic manner, give no credit for this indicator.

The ERS are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood or school age care setting. Process quality is defined in the ERS as consisting of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between the staff and children, among staff members, between staff and parents, among the children themselves, as well as the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment. Also included are those features such as space, schedule, and materials that support these interactions. With the ERS, process quality is assessed primarily through observation and has been found to be more predictive of child outcomes than judging quality based on structural indicators

such as staff to child ratio, group size, cost of care, and even type of care (e.g., child-care center or family child-care home) (Whitebook, Howes, and Phillips, 1995).

Central to these four ERS is the belief that, in order to provide care and education that will permit children to experience a high quality of life while helping them develop their physical, social/emotional, and cognitive abilities, a quality program must provide for the three basic needs all children have:

- Protection of their health and safety;
- Support in building positive relationships and social/emotional resilience; and
- Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience.

No one component is more or less important than the others, nor can one substitute for another. It takes all three to create quality care. Each of the three basic components of quality care manifests itself in tangible forms in the program's environment, curriculum, schedule, supervision, and interaction; and can be observed. These are the key aspects of process quality that are assessed in these environment rating scales.

The ERS define environment in a broad sense and guide the observer to assess the arrangement of space both indoors and outdoors, the materials and activities offered to the children, the supervision and interactions (including language) that occur in the classroom, and the schedule of the day, including routines and activities. The support offered to parents and staff is also included. One classroom is assessed at a time, thus providing an in-depth picture of the ongoing quality of care. An assessment usually takes at least three hours of observation in a classroom, followed by a short interview with the teacher.

The scales have good interrater reliability and validity and have demonstrated in numerous studies to be good predictors of child outcomes, thus making them suitable for research and program evaluation. Since they were developed in close collaboration with realistic field-based sites, they are also widely used in program improvement efforts. Each scale has a training program; the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, and FCCERS-R training programs include an interactive videotape.

Research and program evaluation uses of the ERS have been extensive since 1980 when the original ECERS was published. Most major U.S. studies of the effects of early childhood programs on child development outcomes have used one or more of the ERS, including the *National Child Care Staffing Study* (Whitebook, Howes, and Phillips, 1989), the *Family and Child Experiences Study* (FACES) (1997), the *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study* (1995), and the *Pre-Kindergarten Study* (2005). The FDCRS was used in *The Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care* (Galinsky et al., 1994). In each of these studies, a significant relationship was found between higher scores on the ERS and more positive child development outcomes in areas considered important for later school success. Children in programs scoring high on the ERS were more competent socially as well as cognitively and verbally. The effects of higher quality early childhood experiences, as indicated by high ERS scores, have now been shown to last at least through the second grade of elementary school (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 1999). Research is continuing to evaluate longer-lasting effects.

The Environment Rating Scales in Program Improvement

The ERS are used in a variety of ways in program improvement efforts, including self-assessment by center staff and family child-care providers, preparation for credentialing and accreditation, and voluntary improvement efforts by state licensing and other agencies. The following examples are from the United States:

- The state of Arkansas has trained personnel who do assessments and provide training and technical assistance so that child-care centers and homes can increase their quality scores on the ERS. The Federal money allotments for improving child care are linked to measurable program improvement on the scales. A unique feature of the Arkansas program is that parents who select child-care facilities with an average of 4.5 or higher on the ERS are eligible for two times the state child-care tax exemption. Thus both parents and providers are being rewarded for quality improvements that benefit the children.
- North Carolina has a program called “Partnerships for Inclusion” which has been effective in on-site consultation with child-care staff to include children with disabilities in programs for typically developing children. The ERS are used as a basis for their consultants. This has enabled many children who require early intervention services to be served in inclusive programs.
- Many counties involved in the state of North Carolina’s quality improvement program, Smart Start, require training on and use of the scales in self-assessment before a center or family child-care home may apply for a grant. This ensures that the staff will order equipment, materials and/or request training based on needs that have been objectively substantiated.
- North Carolina currently uses scale scores as part of their 5 star Rated License System. Centers and family child-care homes are awarded either one or two stars based on compliance with licensing standards. Programs may voluntarily apply for an additional three stars based on a set of quality measures including teacher and director education, and level of process quality as measured by the appropriate environment scale. Only the lowest level of licensing is mandatory. However, an additional fee is paid to the provider of subsidized care for each additional star earned voluntarily in this tiered reimbursement program.
- Tennessee uses the ERS for a yearly program evaluation to create a “Report Card” that must be posted with the license, so child-care consumers have access to reliable information on the quality of child care they are selecting for their children. Technical assistance and training are available if requested by providers.
- Other states, including California, The District of Columbia, Delaware, Massachusetts, Montana, Mississippi, Kansas, Oregon, Kentucky, New Mexico, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Ohio and Nebraska have also initiated quality evaluation and improvement programs using the ERS. Each state is tailoring its use of the scales to its individual needs and resources.
- All the U.S. military services have been using the ERS routinely in their child-care centers and family child-care homes for program improvement and monitoring. The military child development system was recognized by Executive Order of the President in 1998 for its high quality.
- The ERS are widely used by programs as they prepare for various national accreditation and credentialing programs. This is due to the fact that the scales use a format with indicators at four levels of quality from inadequate to excellent that provide a

blueprint for gradual change. The content of the scales is completely supportive of the various national credentialing and accreditation programs.

Use of the ERS in Other Countries

It is also interesting to note that the ERS have been used in research studies and program improvement efforts in many other countries including Canada, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Iceland, Portugal, England, Spain, Austria, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Hungary, Greece, and Japan. The scales have proven reliable and valid in each country with relatively minor adaptations. No doubt there are cultural differences among these various countries, yet each of these countries adheres to a core set of child development values and early childhood practices common to most modern industrialized countries (Tietze et al., 1996). It has been shown that in England, Greece, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and Austria, higher scores on the scales are related to more positive child development outcomes (Petrogannis and Melhuish, 1996, European Child Care and Education Study Group, 1997).

- In Canada, the ERS are available in both English and French. In many of the provinces, they are used as a voluntary part of the licensing visit. The license is given for compliance with a licensing checklist, composed mainly of health and safety items. During the visit, the licensing consultant also completes one of the ERS and, with the voluntary cooperation of the caregiver, sets improvement goals for the program. The scales are used over a longer period in intensive consultation with programs that show problems during the licensing visit.
- In Sweden, several projects are using the Swedish translation of the ECERS for program improvement. For example, in Stockholm, the staff working together in a classroom independently completes one subscale of the scale each month, then discusses their scores under the leadership of their head teacher, who is a fully trained preschool teacher. The staff makes and carries out its own improvement plans. A study of this low cost program showed substantial gains in quality.
- In Germany, the translations of the ERS are presently being used in many areas to evaluate the quality of child care and kindergarten programs. Reports are provided to administrative agencies and to center staff, as a basis for program improvement. In addition, the scales are being considered as part of planning a program accreditation system.

For further information on the ERS, visit www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers.

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Thelma Harms

Early Childhood Music Education Commission (ECME)

The International Society for Music Education (ISME) was founded in 1953 through the joint efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Music Council (IMC), and the U.S.-based Music Educators National Conference (MENC). With members in over seventy countries, ISME is currently headquartered in Australia and is constituted by seven special interest commissions, each of which holds individual international conferences immediately preceding the biennial ISME World Conference. The early childhood commission was chartered in 1984, and has since met every two years at locations from Capetown to Copenhagen, providing an international forum for cultural exchange. Issues examined include children's inherent musicality as manifest in their play, advances in music and neuroscience research; the roles of the family, schooling, and culture in musical development; and the preservation of cultural traditions in the light of the breakdown of cultural barriers. Proceedings are published and are often reprinted in one of three annual ISME journals. For more information, see www.isme.org.

Lori Custodero

Early Childhood Research & Practice (ECRP)

Early Childhood Research & Practice (ECRP), the first Internet-only, peer-reviewed, open-access journal in early childhood education, addresses issues related to the development, care, and education of children from birth to approximately eight years of age. The journal focuses mainly on research with clear implications for practice and contains articles on practice-related research and development.

ECRP was established in 1999 with funding from the U.S. Department of Education under the auspices of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. When the clearinghouse system was discontinued in 2003,

the editors—Lilian G. Katz and Dianne Rothenberg—explored other economic models to keep the journal available at no cost to readers. In 2004, with funding from the Bernard van Leer Foundation and institutional support from the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the journal became bilingual, publishing all articles in both English and Spanish. The journal is available online at <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu>.

Lilian G. Katz, Diane Rothenberg, and Laurel Preece

Early Childhood Research Quarterly (ECRQ)

Early Childhood Research Quarterly (ECRQ) is sponsored by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**. The *Quarterly* publishes research and scholarship related to the development, care, and education of children from birth through eight years of age. The articles reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the field and of the National Association. Manuscripts published in the *Quarterly* are evaluated using blind peer review. The reviewers include international as well as U.S. researchers and scholars. Ad hoc reviewers, as well as Consulting Editors and Editorial Board members, provide critiques of submitted manuscripts.

The first issue of *ECRQ* was published in March 1986 with Lilian Katz at the University of Illinois as the first editor. The purpose of the *Quarterly*, described in the first issue, has been to provide a publication outlet for research and scholarship that addresses issues with important implications for policy and practice. The *Quarterly* has continued this tradition since that first issue. The *Quarterly* occasionally publishes topical issues. These issues have focused, for example, on research related to **Head Start**, to **inclusion of children with disabilities** in programs with their typically developing classmates, and to research related to early learning in **math** and **science**. The *Quarterly* is currently published by Pergamon, an imprint of Elsevier, Inc.

Karen Diamond

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

The term Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) embodies a field characterized by grounded theory, practices, and applied research concerned with the causes and consequences of disability in the first eight years of life. The field has evolved since its inception in the 1960s and 1970s based on increasingly more sophisticated understandings of the nature of early childhood disability and a clearer articulation of the obligations of society to **young children with disabilities** and their families. As the name itself implies, the field of ECSE can be conceptualized as a synthesis of knowledge and practice in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. But the field is more than the sum of these two components; it now represents a distinct body of professional knowledge, practice, and policy. The defining characteristics of ECSE may be found in the arenas of theory, program

design (including professional preparation, credentialing, and standard-setting), state and federal social policy, and applied research.

Theoretical Foundations and Contemporary Understandings

Contributions from Early Childhood Education. Historical elements of the field of early childhood education have been incorporated into contemporary interpretations of ECSE. These include the Enlightenment and subsequent Romantic notions of childhood as a distinct time of human development in which both nature and nurture play key roles. Generally rejecting Calvinist concepts of the sinful human, Jean-Jacques **Rousseau**, Friedrich **Froebel**, and Johann **Pestalozzi**, among others, articulated a view of the child as capable, curious, innocent, active, and intentional. In addition, these early proponents particularized the early years of life as distinct from adult responses to and interpretations of the world. They suggested that there is a sequential developmental trajectory and that children have differential ways of thinking and behaving as they progress along such a trajectory.

Twentieth century writers, philosophers, and pedagogues took these ideas further, providing more complex analyses of the early years as times of psychosocial, cognitive, linguistic, and motor development. Thus, the work of John **Dewey**, Sigmund **Freud**, Arnold **Gesell**, Erik **Erikson**, and Jean **Piaget** influenced the field of early childhood in ways that have been incorporated into today's conceptualizations of ECSE. Complementing the primarily psychological orientation that these contributors offered, the work of human ecologists (Urie **Bronfenbrenner** and his followers) has also helped define the field as one that is alert to the contextual aspects of development. More recently, the social constructivist theories of Lev **Vygotsky**, as interpreted in the United States by Wertsch, Rogoff, and others, has shifted the focus from concepts of fixed stages of development to more dynamic variables associated with the developmental niche (cf. Super, 1987) and the influence of sociocognitive interactions with peers and more capable others.

Contributions from Special Education. Emerging roughly at the same time as Rousseau's Enlightenment ideas was a body of work interested in abnormal development and its amelioration. Beginning perhaps with the publication of Itard's *The Wild Boy of Aveyron* in 1801, European and American educators began to describe cases of developmental disability associated with early experiential deprivation, congenital conditions leading to mental retardation and psychomotor impairments, and chronic physical and mental illnesses. Subsequently, a significant effort was made to provide various forms of humane and not so humane treatment to individuals with disabilities. For example, in France and the United State, large-scale congregate institutions were built to house those with cognitive, sensory, and health-related disabilities (e.g., the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb was built in 1818 in Connecticut, and the Perkins Institute and Massachusetts School for the Blind opened in the 1830s. These and similar institutions were soon expanded to serve "idiots" and "morons" whom it was believed could benefit from intensive and sheltered long-term treatment).

In the early part of the twentieth century, the field of special education began to emerge in conjunction with the rapid expansion of public schooling. Technical

concerns with the diagnostic process (e.g., Alfred Binet's design of **intelligence tests** that could be used to predict intellectual ability), behavioral treatment (Edgar Doll's early work in operant conditioning), and the effects of social cues and environment all became the building blocks for contemporary special education practices. Much of this work challenged Darwinian notions of purely inherited and fixed intellectual and social capacities, thus creating a rationale for the efficacy and imperative of treatment for those whose development deviated from the norm.

Converging Theory and Practice. It could be argued that Maria **Montessori's** work in Rome, where she established the Orthophrenic School for the Cure of the Feeble-minded in 1899, was the first example of a systematic effort to work with young children with significant developmental disabilities. Her belief that "defective children were not extrasocial beings, but were entitled to the benefits of education as much as—if not more than—normal ones" (Roos, 1978) became a key principle in the practice of special education. Subsequently, she turned her attention to developmental challenges associated with early environmental constraints. Her *Casa dei Bambini* in the slums of Rome was an explicit effort to mitigate the effects of poverty in early childhood. These two strains of intervention—in response to developmental impairments as well as the social conditions of early development—can be seen as the basis for the field of ECSE as it is understood today.

By the 1960s, J. McVicker Hunt and Benjamin Bloom, among others, were leading investigations of the interdependence of innate capacity, the qualities of environment in the early years, and the role of "cultural deprivation" as it was then conceptualized. These three streams of investigation invited interdisciplinary research and practice, exemplified over the past four decades by the work of neonatologists (Brazelton), sociologists (Bronfenbrenner), developmental psychologists (Samaroff, Chandler), behavioral psychologists (Bijou, Bricker, Strain), and proponents of **family systems** approaches (Turnbull, Dunst).

These historical and contemporary interpretations of young children and early disability have created a somewhat eclectic, a-theoretical approach to Early Childhood Special Education as it is practiced today. Many practitioners remain focused on a "medical model" that embraces the clinical concepts of diagnosis and treatment aimed at the absence of pathology (normalcy) even as they incorporate **sociocultural** perspectives that take into account the **ecology of childhood**, in which the concern is with the effects of early experience and the quality of caregiving environments. Depending on both the nature of the individual child and the professional orientation of the practitioner, ECSE may draw upon behavioral, biomedical, or psychosocial/developmental models of intervention as applied in homes, child-care centers, preschool programs, public schools, or community agencies.

Programmatic Representations of ECSE

The practice of ECSE has its recent roots in compensatory early childhood programs such as Project **Head Start** (established in 1964) and more targeted,

intervention-oriented programs funded by the Handicapped Children's Early Education Act of 1968. Project Head Start is significant in this light as a model of comprehensive, family-directed support aimed at both individual children's well-being and the family's economic and social development. Grounded in Hunt's observations of the link between **poverty** and early childhood disability, Head Start began as a form of primary prevention. The working assumption was that early educational support for children living in poverty, in combination with **parental education** and support provided in the context of extensive social services, would increase the likelihood of educational success and reduce the incidence of childhood disability. Responding to a concern that some young children with disabilities were not being included in Head Start classrooms, in 1972 the U.S. Congress mandated that at least 10 percent of Head Start enrollments include children with diagnosed disabilities. In this way, Head Start became an important national effort to provide direct services to young children with a wide range of disabilities, and it was intended to serve as a model for other program development in the public and private sectors.

The Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP) was conceived by Congress in 1968 as a means to demonstrate innovative approaches to the treatment of young children with disabilities as well as those who were "at risk" for educational disability due to development that was compromised by environmental or biological conditions. Programs were required to model not only new approaches to treatment, they were also expected to involve parents intensively (like Head Start), pilot effective methods of program evaluation, and ultimately lead to local community sponsorship and funding. Dozens of new programs received three-year pilot funding under the First Chance Network, thus establishing a national context for the subsequent expansion of special education and therapy for children from birth to school entry age.

Head Start, HCEEP, and related program initiatives were growing at the same time that states were limiting admissions to or closing residential institutions for individuals with severe disabilities. This had two direct consequences. First, the financial burden for care was shifted from centralized, institutional settings, often situated in remote rural locations, to local, community-based nonprofit organizations and, later, public schools. Second, the social support burden was shifted from institutions (where little parent-child contact occurred) to families. In this way, the treatment of very young children with disabilities became a matter of family responsibility rather than a state commitment. Some states systematically developed family support measures to offset the effects of this shift. In other states, families received little help for the new demands placed on them as a result of deinstitutionalization.

Another historical development that became salient beginning in the 1970s and 1980s was a marked increase in the incidence of childhood disability. This increase was a function of improved diagnostic and reporting procedures (including greater access to local clinics and implementation of federally mandated Child Find procedures), increased survival rates for premature infants due to improved medical technologies, and measured increases in post-natal disability such as **autism** as well as cognitive, motor, and behavioral complications following maternal substance abuse. This convergence of model program development,

deinstitutionalization and the shift to community-based care, and the growing incidence of early childhood disability all contributed to the ways in which the field of ECSE was defined and practiced.

Professional organizations have also played a key role in the conceptualization and standards that characterize ECSE. The two primary constituencies of professionals have been early childhood special educators and clinical specialists affiliated with the **Division for Early Childhood (DEC)** of the **Council for Exceptional Children** and early childhood teachers and program directors affiliated with the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**. These two groups have collaborated closely over the past ten years to articulate standards for professional practice and preparation. Following a critique of the original NAEYC's guidelines for **Developmentally Appropriate Practice** (Bredekamp and Copple, 1987) for undue emphasis on child development at the exclusion of children whose development does not follow the "normal" course (Mallory, 1992) and the standard's failure to account for variations in cultural context (Mallory and New, 1994), the guidelines were revised to include strategies for use in infant and preschool classrooms designed for typically developing children as well as those with special needs and those from minority and non-U.S. cultures. Further, the revised guidelines now include significant reference to assessment procedures, classroom adaptations, interdisciplinary therapy, and parent involvement appropriate to young children with disabilities. In complementary fashion, DEC has articulated recommended practices for **early intervention** and early childhood special education (Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, and McLean, 2005).

In addition to describing current approaches to child assessment, family participation, program design, therapeutic interventions, and program evaluation processes, DEC has also been a strong advocate for improved **professional development** and licensure. Together the two organizations have had a significant impact on the U.S. Department of Education personnel preparation initiatives and **state licensing standards**. It is now the norm for states to require some form of early childhood special education teaching credential, often associated with a baccalaureate or master's degree in ECSE or a related field. This, in turn, has led to the rapid expansion of ECSE programs in colleges and universities nationwide, many of which are located within regular early childhood teacher education programs. However, a shortage persists of qualified teachers who are capable of working effectively with young children with disabilities and their families. The collaboration of early childhood teachers and those who specialize in working with young children with disabilities has been fostered by increased application of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary team models. Because young children with disabilities often experience multiple challenges to their development, and because treatment is seen as most effective when provided in natural environments such as home or school (rather than isolated, clinical settings), ECSE programs often include diverse specialists who must carefully coordinate their work with individual children and families. Thus, a child with motor and cognitive impairments might receive direct support from an occupational therapist, a speech therapist, a child psychologist, and a teacher, all working in the same setting and orchestrating their interactions with the child in a way that assures her inclusion

in the classroom group and effective delivery of therapies as required in an IFSP or IEP.

The final essential characteristic of ECSE to be addressed here is the role of family-centered service delivery. While the initial focus of ECSE was on individual child treatment and education, the ecological orientation that came to define special education in the 1970s and 1980s was translated into policy requirements in the 1980s and 1990s. Family-centered models emphasize full parent participation in child assessment and subsequent decision-making about program design, parent support through educational and social services, counseling for parents and families experiencing emotional stress related to raising a child with a disability, and, in some programs, specific training for parents in **advocacy** techniques to increase their ability to secure appropriate services (Dunst, Trivette, and Deal, 1988; Turnbull and Turnbull, 1986).

State and Federal Policies

The field of ECSE has been significantly affected by the implementation of federal and state laws and regulations over the past thirty years. In addition to the Head Start integration mandate mentioned above, federal special education laws beginning with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 have had profound impacts on services for young children with disabilities. While the early versions of the law did not mandate free, appropriate public education for children below six years old, subsequent amendments did. When the law was revised in 1987, it included a requirement for educational services beginning at age 3 and allowed access to federal dollars for those states that chose to begin services at birth. Under Part C of the law, children from birth to three years of age who are deemed to be “at risk” for school failure due to developmental problems and/or environmental challenges associated with poverty or harsh living conditions may be served, in addition to those with diagnosed disabilities. Beginning in 1987, programs serving children from birth to three years may develop **Individual Family Service Plans** (rather than **Individual Education Plans**), reflecting the family-centered practices described above. The current version of the law, known since 1997 as IDEA (**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**), preserves the requirement for free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, beginning at age 3.

States have enacted laws and policies that parallel the federal legislation. Some states (e.g., Maryland, Minnesota, New York) have extended the mandatory provision of services even earlier, to the birth of a child with a known disability or condition with a strong likelihood of causing later impairment. Such services tend to be home based in the case of infants and available in day care centers and preschool programs in the case of toddlers and preschoolers. These service delivery systems are often under the jurisdiction of health and human service agencies rather than local or state educational agencies, but the nature of service tends to reflect the practice standards referred to above regardless of type of government sponsorship.

The Focus of Applied Research

Research in the field of ECSE over the past three decades has focused on four major areas of interest. First, classroom-based alternative treatment and education approaches have been extensively studied, from traditional behavior modification models to more ecologically oriented analyses that investigate the transactions between children and their social contexts. Particular therapy models have been examined, such as sensory integration techniques, **augmentative and alternative communication** strategies, and dietary and related biochemical experiments with children with presumed health-related disorders (e.g., hyperactivity, autism, seizure disorders). Second, considerable research has occurred in preschool classrooms on effective strategies for enhancing the social integration of children with disabilities and typically developing children. Again, a major orientation of this research has been on the ecology of childhood disability, with concerns for how young children establish and sustain friendships and how children use peers for problem solving and to fulfill social needs. Third, extensive research has focused on the effect on families of raising a young child with a congenital or acquired disability. **Family systems theory** has framed much of this research, and a notable shift from pathological or deficit models (child as a negative factor) to more asset-based models (child as opportunity for family growth and reorganization) has occurred in recent years. The DEC recommended practices cited earlier (Sandall et al., 2005) articulate a synthesis of research on effective practices for young children with disabilities and their families with respect to assessment, family support, interdisciplinary educational practices (including the use of **technology**), policy and systems change, and personnel preparation. Finally, policy-oriented research has emphasized the efficacy of ECSE programs and their cost-benefit to society. Much of this work has sought to illuminate the long-term developmental outcomes of children served in such programs and the long-term financial benefits associated with early prevention or intervention. *See also* Disabilities, Young Children with; Teacher Certification/Licensure.

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Bruce L. Mallory

Early Head Start

Early Head Start is a federal, two-generation **Head Start** program, or low-income pregnant women and fathers, and children ages birth to three and their families. The program was created by the Head Start reauthorization legislation in 1994. The 1998 Coats Human Services Reauthorization Act increased Early Head Start funding to 10 percent of the Head Start budget. As of 2004, the program had expanded to 708 American communities serving approximately 68,000 children and their families in all states and in many Tribes and Nations.

While Early Head Start is a child development program, it has a two-generation focus. Programs can select to offer families one of four program options: home-based (in which families receive weekly home visits and the option of biweekly group socialization), center-based (in which children and families receive quality center-based services and **parenting education**), combination (in which families receive specified combinations of home-based and center-based services), and locally designed options. Program options are selected after programs complete community needs assessments every three years. Early Head Start is a distinct program within the Head Start family of programs and follows the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Early Head Start programs serve families whose incomes are at the poverty level or below and who have greatest needs unmet by other community services. Across all Early Head Start programs approximately a fifth of families do not speak English as their primary language. At least 10 percent of enrollment must be made available to children with verified disabilities. Typically, about a third of parents are teens at the time of the birth of the Early Head Start child and typically fewer than half of the families have two resident parents.

The following notable features have been instituted during Early Head Start's brief program life:

Research. The Head Start Bureau instituted a rigorous, random assignment evaluation in 1996, carried out by Mathematica Policy Research, Columbia National Center for Children and Families and fifteen research universities. Together, the researchers formed the Early Head Start Research Consortium, which oversaw the evaluation and completed local research and cross-site studies. 3001 children and families were assessed at ages fourteen, twenty-four, thirty-six months and again before kindergarten entry. A fifth-grade follow up begins in 2007. At age 3 (at completion of the program), results from the evaluation showed that Early Head Start had a broad pattern of significant impacts across a wide array of child and parent outcomes and in nearly all program subgroups. There were relatively large effect sizes found in fully implemented programs providing both home visits and center-based services. The kindergarten follow-up study showed that a number of the program impacts remained two years after children left the program and that formal care and education during the preschool years also supported gains from the zero to three program. Many lessons for program improvement were drawn from the research findings. Subsequently, a mental health research consortium and a survey of program performance have been instituted. Research reports and Research to Practice briefs can be accessed at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/>.

Training and Technical Assistance. While Early Head Start is served by Head Start T/TA activities, special infant-toddler focused training has been provided by the Early Head Start National Resource Center located at **Zero to Three**, Washington DC. <http://www.ehsnrc.org>.

Special Initiatives. Since its inception, a number of initiatives have enabled the program to focus on areas of special need. These have included the Hilton Special Quest program to develop expertise in working with infants and toddlers with disabilities; the Child Care Partnership Initiative to build community-level expertise in Early Head Start child-care partnerships; the Child Welfare Services Demonstration for serving children in the child welfare system within Early Head Start; the Enhanced Home Visiting Demonstration to develop model programs for kith and kin care; the Fatherhood Demonstration to develop model programs for involving fathers; the Culturally Responsive and Aware Dual Language Education Project; Operation Parenting Edge, and StoryQUEST: Celebrating Beginning Language and Literacy.

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Helen Raikes

Early Intervention

“Early intervention” as applied to early childhood education refers to policies, systems, programs, services, and supports provided to vulnerable young children

and/or their families in order to maximize a child's development. The concepts and practices of early intervention rely upon knowledge derived from the developmental science of normative child development as well as the developmental science of risk and disability, coupled with clinical experience and evidence-based educational and developmental strategies. Research findings and social values over the last century have led to the recognition of the unique contributions special supportive services provide to children during the early childhood years. Vulnerable children and families for whom early intervention may be valuable include children with established disabilities as well as children whose development is at risk due to a variety of biological or environmental factors.

Established disabilities include children with cognitive delays (often leading to a diagnosis of mental retardation), autism, motor disabilities, communication and language disorders, and hearing and vision impairments. Recently, attention has been paid to the importance of early intervention for children with or at risk for social/emotional disorders and challenging behavior.

Vulnerable children at risk for developmental problems such as those due to prematurity/low birth weight, infectious diseases, exposure to toxic substances and other environmental health risks, **poverty**, **violence**, abuse, or neglect can benefit from a variety of preventive intervention programs. The populations of children needing early intervention are expanding rapidly worldwide (ISEI, 2004; Olness, 2003).

The concept of early intervention implies that: (1) acting earlier rather than later results in important effects not gained if action is delayed, and (2) action is needed beyond that typically available and is based on specific circumstances and unique child and family characteristics. First, intervening early is grounded in the recognition of the impact of the early years on a child's later life. Recently, this belief has been realized in various "school **readiness**" movements. Studies of the difficulties of children with special needs have shown that developmental problems or school failure can be reduced or prevented through effective early intervention (Guralnick, 1998). Early intervention services and systems are also supported by social values; in other words, supporting families and children who are in need is considered the right thing to do. Second, early intervention refers to services beyond those typically available that are targeted to the particular needs of children and families that have been carefully assessed. This component of early intervention relates to the need to individualize interventions for the child and family.

Early Intervention Policies and Systems

Public policies and systems have been crafted to ensure that certain populations of children receive early intervention in order to optimize their development. One of the earliest of the United States federal efforts was **Head Start**, launched in 1965 with the purpose of improving outcomes for children whose development was at risk particularly related to poverty. While the Head Start program has not reached a level of funding to serve all eligible children, the program provides funding and guidance to local Head Start programs nationwide to serve low income children

as well as children with disabilities. A goal of Head Start is for 10 percent of the enrollment to be children with disabilities.

Other public policies related to early intervention in early childhood education have been developed at the federal, state, and local levels. A major federal program for children with disabilities is the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** established in 1975 (as the Education of the Handicapped Act). IDEA provides funds and guidance to states to provide a free, appropriate education for children with disabilities from birth to twenty-one years of age. IDEA contains two major provisions related to early intervention for young children: (1) Part C for infants and toddlers who have disabilities and the option for states to serve children who are at risk for developing a disability or developmental delay, and (2) the preschool provisions of Part B which provide for appropriate education and related services to children ages 3–5 with disabilities or developmental delays.

Various state and local policies have been enacted over the past several years to provide early intervention to young children including an increasing number of state programs to provide early childhood education to children at risk. Included in this trend is the establishment of state Interagency Coordinating Councils (ICCs) under IDEA which recognize that young children with disabilities and their families may need coordinated services and supports provided by many state and local agencies including health, education, Medicaid, professional development institutions, social services, and mental health. There are other state cross-agency efforts focused on young children including state early education or school readiness efforts and children's **mental health** initiatives.

Early Intervention Services

Effective, highly individualized early intervention systems rely on many disciplines, including those from health and education as well as those representing social and behavioral domains. Early intervention services require specialized knowledge and skills in order to be effective (Sandall et al., 2005). National professional associations have issued guidelines for appropriately meeting children's special needs. For example, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** and the **Division for Early Childhood (DEC)** have produced joint recommendations for personnel knowledge and skills needed to effectively provide early intervention and special education to young children with disabilities, and have developed a position statement (see www.dec-sped.org) with respect to delivering early intervention and special services in typical settings referred to as "inclusion." DEC also provides recommendations for appropriate early intervention and special education services for young children with disabilities (Sandall et al., 2005). In addition, Head Start provides guidance for programs serving eligible children in the form of Head Start Program Performance Standards and issues specific guidance related to serving children with disabilities within Head Start programs.

An important development in the general field of early intervention over the past thirty years is the principle and associated practices of **inclusion**. A major feature of this concept refers to the delivery of special services or early intervention services within the context of natural environments, that is, environments

where the child's peers and family typically spend time. This movement has led to delivering early intervention services in typical early childhood settings such as child-care environments, preschools, and other community settings (see DEC position on Inclusion, www.dec-sped.org). Inclusion has affected how personnel are prepared, how services are delivered, and how society views children with special needs (Guralnick, 2001b). Of importance, the services of IDEA can be provided in any location as long as they are overseen by IDEA agencies. Thus, the IDEA early intervention services are not defined by a place (e.g., special class) but rather by a child's written **individualized education plan** (IEP). Inclusion has led to the blending of programs, funding sources, children, and personnel so that all children, whether receiving early intervention or typical early childhood services, can be together. *See also* Child Abuse and Neglect; Disabilities, Young Children with; Early Childhood Special Education.

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Barbara J. Smith and Michael J. Guralnick

Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development

Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development is published by Routledge on behalf of Training, Advancement and Co-operation in Teaching Young Children (TACTYC). As the importance of early childhood education and care in providing the foundations for lifelong learning is now widely acknowledged, the journal aims to broaden the international debate by representing a wide range of perspectives from different countries, different disciplines, and different research methodologies.

The journal publishes papers which relate to the training, education, and continuing professional development of all early years practitioners including managers, support staff, qualified teachers, and higher education academics teaching on early childhood courses and specialisms. *Early Years* is published three times per year. For more information, please visit <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09575146.asp>.

Rod Parker-Rees and Marian Whitehead

ECEJ. See *Early Childhood Education Journal*

ECME. See Early Childhood Music Education Commission

Ecology of Human Development

The ecology of human development, as defined by its chief architect, Urie Bronfenbrenner, is a scientific perspective that addresses “the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings within which the developing person lives.” This process of accommodation is to be understood “as it is affected by relations between those settings, and [as it is affected] by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded.” In terms of early childhood education this definition contains the developing child engaged with others in several settings, interaction between those settings, and ongoing analysis of the ways that those settings “immediate” to the child are in turn shaped by settings and environmental systems more distant from the child.

Origins

In the preface to his now classic book *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, Bronfenbrenner credits Kurt Levin, George Herbert Mead, Sigmund Freud, William and Dorothy Thomas, Edward Tolman, Lev Vygotsky, Kurt Goldstein, Otto Rank, Jean Piaget, and Ronald Fisher as scholars who influenced his development of the ecological perspective. Of these thinkers, the work of Kurt Levin was especially influential, with its conception of the psychological “life space” as made up of a set of regions or territories and Levin’s emphasis on the intersection between the structure of the person and of the situation encountered by that person. Basic Levinian concepts upon which the ecology of human development approach was built included the idea of differentiated regions affecting the psychological development of the child, the concept and motivational power of activities for development, the importance of the connections between people in the settings containing the child, the power of ecological transitions, and the idea of **action research**. The influence of Jean Piaget, with his interest in the child’s construction of reality and perceptual constancy across situations and settings, can be seen in the ecologically oriented definition of development as “the person’s evolving conception of the ecological environment, and his relation to it, as well as the person’s growing capacity to discover, sustain, or alter its properties.” Vygotsky’s influence is found especially at the macro-level, based on his theory of the “sociohistorical evolution of the mind,” the idea that the developing child’s characteristics as a person depend on the options available in a particular culture at a particular time. The strong emphasis within the ecology of human development on understanding development *in context* received impetus from the psychological ecologists of the Kansas school, including Roger Barker, Herbert Wright, and Phillip Schoggen, who adapted observational strategies designed for studying other species to document

the natural behavioral settings of children and the children's behaviors within them.

Key Elements

Context. The ecological perspective involves understanding the meaning that the developing child gives to experience. This meaning is found in the content of what the child perceives, or feels, or thinks about. That content is provided by the setting or settings within which the child engages in activities. These settings are the contexts in which development occurs, and development cannot be understood in the absence of an understanding of those contexts. The ecological approach to studying human development was born out of a reaction to the fact that during much of the twentieth century the study of early development had been conducted "out of context," that is, in the laboratory rather than in the environments within which children grow and develop. The careful specification of the contexts in which development takes place provides one of the primary building blocks for understanding the meaning of that development, together with the particular characteristics of the child her/himself. This interaction can be summarized with the formula $D=f(PE)$, where development (D) is a function of the interaction of the person (P) with the environment (E).

Environmental Systems. In his "reappreciation" of the ecological point of view, Robert Glossop identifies the emphasis on immediate settings and the larger contexts in which those settings and the developing child are embedded as "the cornerstone of the ecological frame of reference." Within the ecological framework these settings and contexts are organized within four environmental systems, conceived as nested one within the next. *Microsystems* are patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations that are experienced by the child directly in a particular setting, like the home or the child-care center classroom, containing other people with distinctive characteristics (temperaments, personalities, belief systems). *Mesosystems* consist of the interrelations between two or more such micro-settings; for instance, parent-caregiver relations between home and the child-care center. *Exosystems* are made up of settings that affect or are affected by the developing child, but do not involve the child as an active participant. The example often used is the world of work, the nature of which shapes the time and energy that the employed parent has available for the child but usually does not include the child as an active participant. The *Macrosystem* refers to beliefs and values found at the level of culture, society, or subculture that manifest themselves consistently as resources, opportunity structures, hazards, lifestyles, and patterns of social exchange in the form and content of the environmental systems (exo-, meso-, micro-) contained within it—a "blue-print," so to speak. For instance, a societal belief in the value of family privacy and individual responsibility for child rearing might be reflected in relatively little concern for the parental role (opportunity to parent) within the [still the same . . . even the example] parent's workplace (exo-), not much discussion of child-rearing issues (social exchange) between parent and child-care center caregiver (meso-), and little help-seeking

beyond the immediate family (resource) by parents even in times of acute stress or crisis.

Ecological Niches. These are regions within the larger environment (society, state) that are particularly favorable or unfavorable to the child's development, because they combine greater or fewer environmental resources with particular personal characteristics. These regions can be defined to some extent by the "social addresses" of education, income, occupation, race, and gender; and the developmental risks associated with low resource regions depend in part on the personal characteristics of the child. For instance, the developmental impacts of living in poverty conditions are likely to be greater for a shy or a physically handicapped child than they are for a child that is outgoing, engaging, and physically well coordinated.

The Active, Initiating Child. The forces propelling development, from an "ecology of human development" perspective, emanate as much from the nature of the developing organism as they do from how and with what resources the environment engages with that child. The child is seen not as a passive recipient of environmental stimulation but as innately motivated to engage actively with the surrounding world. Over time competence consists of the growing capacity to figure out how the world is organized, participate in that organization, and even restructure the world to a certain extent.

Reciprocity. Within the ecological perspective development is a function of the variety and complexity of activities engaged in with others, referred to as joint activities. When what the child does in the activity influences the behavior of the significant other, and that behavior then stimulates a response by the child, to which the other responds in turn, then the relationship is said to be reciprocal. Bronfenbrenner saw this kind of reciprocity, "with its concomitant mutual feedback," as generating a momentum that motivated the participants not only to continue the interaction but also to "engage in progressively more complex patterns of interaction, as in a ping-pong game in which the exchanges tend to become more rapid and intricate as the game proceeds." Development is seen as stimulated by the variety and complexity of the activities engaged in by the child with significant others in his or her psychological field. A distribution of power is necessarily a part of reciprocal activities, and development is seen as enhanced by the gradual shift in the balance of that power in favor of the developing child.

Ecological Transitions. A transition is a move by the developing person to a new and different context. Examples in the life of the child include moving from one place of residence to another, from home to preschool, from preschool to school, away to summer camp and home again, and into the hospital and then home once more. A significant transition of this sort involves the child in new activities, often requiring the establishing of new relationships, and may include experimenting with new roles. For these reasons such transitions are seen as placing high developmental demands on the child, offering both opportunity and risk.

More Recent Extensions of the Ecological Perspective

Later in his career, Bronfenbrenner extended his ecological theory, adding the prefix “bio” to “ecological” in recognition of his long-held view that biological resources are important to understanding human development. Important expansions included further elaboration of the “person” in the person–environment interaction, spelling out ways of understanding and measuring cognitive competence within real-life settings and as mastery of culturally defined, familiar activities. He also added “time” to his interest in context-based person-focused developmental processes, underscoring the importance of recognizing that these processes and their effects will differ at different points in the life course and in different historical periods.

In reassessing his definitions of the four environmental levels, Bronfenbrenner made additions at the micro- and macro-levels, adding greater specificity about the characteristics of the significant others in the immediate contexts containing the child and more emphasis on belief systems, resources, hazards, and opportunity structures at the level of culture and society. Although he made no changes to the definition of the mesosystem (linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing child), others working in the tradition of human ecology have expanded the features of these linkings, proposing, for example, that greater emphasis be given to key other persons in that system as well (Cochran et al., 1990). Relations between *people* in several settings containing the child give meaning and power to this system, a dynamic that is not conveyed through simply considering linkages between settings in general terms. The literature on social networks and social support documents the nature of those meanings.

Applications to Early Childhood Education

The ecological orientation to development has had and continues to have considerable influence within the field of early childhood education, both within the United States and abroad. Within the immediate (micro) settings containing the child the emphasis on the power of reciprocal relations (adult–child, child–child) as the “engines” of development reinforces much previous and contemporary theory and practice related to early childhood education teaching and learning at the classroom level. One application of the priority given to the importance of dyadic relations has been an explicit inclusion of the parent–child dyad in the design of **early intervention** programs, thereby shifting the programmatic focus beyond the individual child to include the parent or other significant adult. This conception, supported with empirical evidence, has underscored the general importance of parent involvement in early education programs, and anticipated the shift to “two-generation” programming that has increasingly become the norm in the twenty-first century (see **Early Head Start**). Recognition of the developmental demands associated with transitions from one immediate setting to another (i.e., home to child care) has shone new light on the need to plan those transitions carefully for children, in order to insure that they are managed in a way that is developmentally enhancing rather than overly challenging.

At the meso-level the importance accorded parent-teacher relationships by the ecological perspective lends support to the ongoing programmatic interest in how to establish and sustain those connections in ways that reduce dissonance and intensify support on behalf of the developing child. With the growing recognition that over half of all American infants and toddlers in child care are being looked after by kinfolk, friends, and neighbors, there is also increased interest in ways that public supports can be used to enhance and strengthen these natural helping systems.

At the level of exo-systems (affecting the child, but indirectly), the ecological orientation provides a renewed focus on the parents' world of work, backed by financial analyses showing that the private sector contributes only 1-2 percent of the total revenues invested in early care and education each year. The absence of any federal paid parental leave from work policy in the United States makes it much more difficult for American parents to form a close, enduring relationship with their newborns than is the case in the rest of the industrialized world, and illustrates how public policies related to the workplace can impact young children in the absence of direct contact with them. Another example of exo-level impact involves the extent to which city governments invest resources in local parks and playgrounds that insure their safety and enhance their developmental potential.

At the macro-level the most unique and enduring contribution made by the ecological perspective has been in helping policymakers, practitioners, and academics track the ways that public policies developed and implemented at the national or state level shape the major institutions of society (workplaces, schools, child-care settings) to affect the development of children through interactions with significant adults and peers. By illuminating these pathways, an ecology of human development framework has brought an understanding of the "family and child impacts" of macro-level policies (both public and private sector) to the fore, insuring that such potential and demonstrated impacts become and continue to be a part of the public policy discourse. *See also* Parents and Parent Involvement.

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ECRP. See *Early Childhood Research & Practice*

ECRQ. See *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*

ECSE. See *Early Childhood Special Education*

Education 3-13

The journal *Education 3-13* is published by Routledge on behalf of the Association for the Study of Primary Education (ASPE). The journal publishes refereed articles representing and analyzing practice, research, and theory that are of relevance to those working with children between the ages of 3 and 13, both in the United Kingdom and internationally.

The journal welcomes submissions on all aspects of education in the form of articles that report classroom research, analyze practice, discuss local and national policy and initiatives, offer a comparative perspective on research and policy, and report on major research projects.

Published three times a year by Routledge, *Education 3-13* will be of interest to students, teachers, advisers, and academics who seek helpful and stimulating ways of viewing what they do, or might do. For more information, please visit <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/03004279.asp>.

Mark Brundrett

Eliot, Abigail Adams (1892–1992)

Abigail Adams Eliot is best known for her contributions to the American nursery school movement. In 1922 Dr. Eliot founded the Ruggles Street Nursery Training School of Boston, where she integrated parent education and teacher training components into work with nursery age children. Her educational philosophy, formulated in 1944, outlined a set of beliefs that anticipated contemporary early childhood education in the United States. She urged teachers to help children develop “balancing traits” and, at the same time, to supply what they need for self-realization. Eliot emphasized the child’s need to balance a sense of security with growing independence; self-expression with self-control; awareness of self with social consciousness; growth in freedom with growth in responsibility; and the opportunity to create with the ability to conform.

Born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, on October 9, 1892, Abigail was the third child of Reverend and Mrs. Christopher Rhodes Eliot. Reverend Eliot served as minister of the Meeting House Hill Church in Dorchester and later of Bulfinch Place Church in Boston’s West End. The Eliot children attended public primary school. Abigail and her older sister, Martha May, graduated first from Boston’s prestigious Winsor School and later from Radcliffe College, located across the Charles River in Cambridge.

After graduating, Eliot began a career in social work with Boston’s Children’s Mission to Children, an organization that placed children in foster homes. Soon disillusioned with social work, she left Boston in 1919 to study economics at Oxford

University. While abroad, Eliot determined that her ambitions lay in education—an interest she attributed in part to her experience as a young child instructed in a Froebelian **kindergarten**.

Through a fortuitous association with Mrs. Henry Greenleaf Pearson, who knew of Margaret McMillan's *The Nursery School* (1919), Eliot learned of the English nursery school movement. Mrs. Pearson, as head of the Women's Education Association's nursery committee, raised money to send Eliot to study at the **Rachel McMillan** Nursery School at Deptford, a slum district of London. Eliot left for England in 1921, eager to learn directly from **Margaret McMillan**, the crusader who first coined the term "nursery school."

Upon returning to Boston in January 1922, the Ruggles Street Day Nursery, situated in Roxbury, became the **Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center**. The change in name reflected a groundbreaking emphasis on "schooling" for very young children. Until that time, young children in group care benefited primarily from improved physical health and safety; educational programs were most often reserved for older children. Additionally, Eliot worked with children living in poverty, unlike colleagues who leaned toward conducting child development research in laboratory nursery schools (Braun and Edwards, 1972, p. 151).

The **Ruggles Street Nursery School** originally employed an eclectic mix of Froebelian gifts, Montessori apparatus, and McMillan materials, plus art supplies, clay, and blocks. Eliot selected soft yellow paint for the schoolroom walls, colored cloth for the tables, and soft rugs for seating. She hung pictures, set out vases of flowers, and used attractive plates and napkins for the children's meals (Eliot, no date, p. 31).

Ruggles Street teachers encouraged the children to play with materials as they chose—to the dismay of some visitors. The emphasis on imagination and creativity shocked Montessori-trained observers. Miss Eliot, in turn, described her own discomfort with the Watson-trained teachers of Teachers College, Columbia University who strove "never to touch a child," a startling departure from her own beliefs about children's needs (Braun and Edwards, 1972, p. 156).

Eliot confronted skepticism in other quarters as well. Lucy Wheelock, founder of Boston's Wheelock College, never endorsed early childhood education as practiced at the Ruggles Street Nursery School, although she did invite Eliot to teach a course on nursery education. Primary educators of the day doubted whether young children should be away from home at all, particularly as susceptibility to contagious diseases increased when children came into close contact. Social workers worried that Ruggles Street teachers lacked adequate training to work effectively with families; Eliot's parent education program was often deemed too "experimental."

In 1926, the Ruggles Street School expanded into new buildings and became the Nursery Training School of Boston. That same year Eliot earned the Master of Education degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, followed by the doctorate in 1930. By then, nursery education had attracted the interest and enthusiasm of middle class families through such programs as the Cambridge Nursery School, a cooperative formed and financed by a group of mothers with guidance from Abigail Eliot.

As the nursery school movement gained momentum, Eliot—with colleagues Patty Smith Hill of Teachers College and Edna Noble White of the Merrill Palmer Institute—began meeting annually with graduates of their respective schools. Dr. Eliot also assisted in founding the National Association for Nursery Education and, in 1933, served as their representative to the federal Works Progress Administration, which provided funds to nursery schools for unemployed families and jobs for teachers. These conferences evolved into the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC). During World War II, Eliot consulted on providing day care for the children of war workers under the Lanham Act.

By mid-century, Dr. Eliot recognized the need to offer four-year, bachelor's degree programs to students preparing to work with young children. In collaboration with Tufts University's President Carmichael, the Boston Nursery Training School became affiliated with the university in 1951. Eliot retired in 1952 and, in 1955, the school was renamed in her honor as the Eliot-Pearson School. Evelyn Goodenough Pitcher took over as director in 1959 and, in 1964, the school was reconfigured as an academic department. Today Abigail Eliot's legacy is known as the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University.

In retirement, Dr. Eliot traveled extensively with her companion of many years, Anna Holman. She continued to work on behalf of children, first by helping to found Pacific Oaks College in California and later by teaching at the Brooks School in Concord, Massachusetts.

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Ann C. Benjamin

Emotional Development. See Curriculum, Emotional Development; Development, Emotional

Environmental Assessments in Early Childhood Education

Environmental assessments in early childhood education involve a set of evaluation tools that are used to assess the quality and quantity of early childhood education environments, such as those found within classrooms, **playgrounds**, and homes. Research studies demonstrate that high-quality care in early childhood programs is associated with features of the physical and social environment; and that these quality measures are predictive of a range of positive developmental outcomes for children in their cognitive, language, social-emotional, and physical domains (e.g., NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000). A thoughtfully designed and organized setting with a positive climate is interpreted as providing a safe, secure, and instructive place for children to be inquisitive and learn—from the teacher, their peers, and their environment.

Environmental assessments have been primarily used for accreditation, licensure, or research purposes. For example, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** developed Standards for Physical Environment in 2005 for accreditation purposes to assess the quality of indoor and outdoor physical environments, including equipment, facilities, and materials to ensure that the environment is welcome, accessible, and promotes children's learning, comfort, health, and safety.

Environmental assessments are developed and utilized based on theories of child development and cultural values and beliefs. One of the more predominant theories is the ecological model developed by Urie **Bronfenbrenner** (1994). Within this model children are observed in one of their natural contexts (e.g., child-care centers, home, and classroom). It is assumed that these settings operate within a broader system (e.g., societal beliefs, state and federal laws and regulations, interactions between caregivers, educators and service systems). Many assessments focus on one or more aspects of the ecology of the setting. Based on adaptations of Carta's model (2002), for example, an environmental assessment could include one or more of the following: (a) Classroom features (e.g., **curriculum**, practices, schedule and nature of activities, materials); (b) interactions of the child with peers, teachers, and parents; (c) staff characteristics (e.g., formal preparation, experience and perceptions about their roles in relationship to their teaching; (d) classroom structures (e.g., group size, adult-child ratios, size of space and its arrangement, nature of equipment and furnishings, and hours of operation).

Environmental assessments are formatted in several ways. For example, these tools may include: (a) Inventories/rating scales and/or checklists; (b) interviews of personnel and family members directly associated with the targeted environment; and/or (c) reviews of pertinent documents. The scope of environmental assessments varies depending upon the following three factors for a child's development: (1) Purpose (e.g., safety, health, quality, or planning); (2) age/focus of child (e.g., infant-toddler, preschooler, or child with special needs); and (3) location (e.g., home setting, classroom, or playground). Individual assessments have been used in conjunction with other assessments to form a better understanding of the child. It is important to note that these assessments are only one picture of a child's surroundings within a specific period of time and should be considered within the broader context. Environmental assessments in early childhood education are developed for various reasons: (a) To ensure the safety and health of children; (b) to assess and ultimately obtain high-quality early childhood educational environments; and (c) to plan the schedule, curriculum, and/or individualized education programs (IEP) (Wolery, 2004). Assessment tools will address one, two or all three of these areas. The following sections will address each of these reasons.

Ensuring Safety, Security, and Health

Environmental assessments that address safety, security, and health issues in early childhood environments are designed to help identify any materials, conditions, and/or events that may lead to unintentional child death or injury. In

addition, these assessments determine whether the responsible adults (i.e., caregivers, teachers) in these settings are engaging in precautions that will prevent any injuries. These assessments focus on areas where accidents are most likely to occur, such as on playgrounds where children may slip or fall. The Public Playground Safety Checklist (Consumer Product Safety Commission [CPSC] 2005) assesses the sturdiness of the equipment, the type of grounding to break falls and the supervision of children as they climb the jungle gym, use the slides or swings. Other assessment instruments ensure that children are safe from potential fires, firearms, weapons, toxic materials, and materials that pose danger of suffocation. For more safety issues, such as issues related to materials, toys, cribs, products, or home equipment, CPSC provides a good source of publications (available online at http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/pub_idx.html).

Achieving Quality Environments for Children

Another reason for developing environmental assessment is to assess the quality of environments that will promote children's overall growth and development, and to design and implement plans to improve that quality, when appropriate. There have been different ways of defining quality of the environment and measuring it. One approach is assessing the overall quality of the classroom or day care environment by including measures of a range of characteristics associated with quality care. For example, the Day Care Environmental Inventory and Observation Schedule for Physical Space (Prescott, Kritchevsky, and Jones 1975) is one of the earlier assessments of child-rearing environments focusing on children in relation to the environment. The Preschool Environmental Rating Scale (Fromm, Rourke, and Buggey, 2000) is another environmental scale that involves physical layout, materials, basic care needs, curriculum, interrelationships, and activities in the setting. The Early Childhood Physical Environment Observation Schedules and Rating Scales (Moore 1994) consist of five types of scales (i.e., Early Childhood Center, Children, and Teacher Profiles; Early Childhood Teacher Style and Dimensions of Education Rating Scales; Early Childhood Physical Environment Scales; Playground and Neighborhood Observation Behavior Maps; Environment/Behavior Observation Schedule for Early Childhood Environments) to assess overall quality of various dimensions of children's environments. The **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale—Revised (ECERS-R)** (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer, 2005) and the **Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale—Revised (ITERS-R)** (Harms, Cryer, and Clifford, 2003) are other assessment tools that have been the most widely used measures of the quality of care in child-care settings including both the physical structures and nonphysical features of the settings.

Many environmental assessments are developed to be used also in home settings for licensing, research, and clinical application purposes. As more families are opting to place their young children in family child-care programs, measures, such as the Family Day Care Rating Scale (Harms and Clifford, 1989), are developed to provide useful information about the quality of the provider's home environment. In addition, these assessments have been used to identify influences on children's development from their home environment. They have also been used to set goals for families who are receiving early intervention services.

Since the legislation of **Individual Family Service Plans**, professionals develop partnerships with families to provide them information in order to make their own decisions regarding what they think is best for their child and family. Examples of these assessments include the following:

- Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Inventory (Caldwell and Bradley, 1984), which is designed to assess physical and social aspects of home environments, such as the interaction between the mother and the child, organization of physical and temporal environment, and the learning materials.
- The Infant/Toddler (IT) HOME, the Early Childhood (EC) HOME, and the Middle Childhood (MC) HOME are three versions of the HOME Inventory used to assess early childhood home settings. More information is available online at <http://www.ualr.edu/crldept/home4.htm>.

In addition to these purposes, assessments such as the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) (Harms, Jacops, and White, 1996) have also been designed for not only home but other group care programs for children during out-of-school time.

Planning the Schedule, Curriculum and/or Program

Planning the schedule, curriculum, or program for either a group of children or individual children requires designing and organizing the environment according to children's diverse cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as their varied developmental levels. To accomplish this, the assessment tools just mentioned can be used as well as some others, such as The Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI) (Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, and Rescorla, 1990), which is based on the NAEYC Guidelines for **Developmentally Appropriate Practices** for 4-5-year-old children. CPI is a rating scale with an emphasis on curriculum, teaching practices, and the emotional climate of child-care programs.

Other instruments focus on the development of individual children, particularly those having certified disabilities (i.e., with **Individualized Education Plans** or Individualized Family Service Plans) and their **inclusion** in general education settings. Some of these instruments include the following:

- The Ecological Congruence Assessment (Wolery et al., 2000)
- Classroom Ecological Inventory (CEI) (Fuchs et al., 1994)
- The Assessment of Practices in Early Elementary Classroom (APEEC) (Hemmeter, Maxwell, Ault, and Schuster, 2001).

These assessments help parents, teachers, and other professionals plan for smooth transitions for children from more restrictive to inclusive settings as well as ensuring access for all children to the curriculum, the other children, teachers and other features of the environment. Other environmental assessments are designed to plan for specific curricula areas, such as children's literacy. The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit for children from 3- to 8-years-old (Smith and Dickinson, 2002) is designed as a comprehensive set of observation tools for describing the extent to which classrooms provide children optimal support for their language and literacy development. *See also* Classroom Environments; Disabilities, Young Children with; Ecology of Human Development; Grouping; Parents and Parent Involvement.

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Hatice Zeynep Inan and Laurie Katz

Environments, Classroom. See Classroom Environments

Environmental Health

Childhood health problems such as asthma and other respiratory diseases, neurodevelopment disorders, endocrine disruption and cancers have all been associated with environmental risk factors. Air pollutants (both indoor and outdoor) lead, pesticides, tobacco smoke, and house dust mite and cockroach allergens are

important environmental contributors to childhood illnesses. Genetic and socioeconomic conditions have been shown to increase the susceptibility of children to the adverse effects of these environmental stressors. Over the past several decades there has been growing evidence of the increase in incidence rates, morbidity, and mortality for a number of these health problems (Israel et al., 2005). In developing countries additional environmental burdens to children include exposure to biologically contaminated water, poor sanitation, disease vectors such as mosquitoes, and unsafe use of chemicals and waste all of which are worsened by the effects of poverty, conflict, and malnutrition. Over 40 percent of the global burden of disease attributed to environmental factors falls on children below five years of age, who account for only about 10 percent of the world's population (WHO, 2006).

Children are more vulnerable than adults to environmental risks for the following several reasons (Landrigan et al., 2004; NAS, 1993; USEPA, 2006):

1. Children drink more water, eat more food, and breathe more air pound-for-pound than adults resulting in disproportionately heavier exposures to environmental agents.
2. Children's metabolic pathways are immature making them in most cases less able to metabolize, detoxify, and excrete environmental agents.
3. Environmental chemicals can do more harm to central nervous, reproductive, immune, endocrine and digestive systems during phases of rapid growth and development, including embryonic, fetal and early childhood life stages.
4. Young children crawl, put things in their mouths, and sometimes even eat dirt. These actions tend to put them in closer contact with some environmental agents compared with adults.
5. Children have a longer life expectancy and more time to develop chronic diseases that might be triggered by early environmental exposures. Early childhood exposure to certain carcinogens or toxicants may be more likely to lead to disease than the same exposures experienced later in life.

Ambient and indoor air pollution is associated with asthma and other respiratory disorders in children. From 1990 to 2002 over 50 percent of children lived in counties in the United States where the ground-level ozone standard was exceeded during the year; from 2000 (first measured) to 2002, between 20 and 30 percent of children lived in counties where the fine particulate standard (PM_{2.5}) was exceeded (USEPA, 2003). Ozone provokes airway inflammation and reactivity at low levels. Ozone levels have been related to increases in asthma emergency room visits in Atlanta, Georgia, New Jersey, and Mexico City. Fine particulates derived primarily from power plants and vehicle emissions have been associated with asthma and other respiratory conditions, low birth weight, and increased risk of birth defects (Landrigan, 2004).

Indoor air pollution consists of gases and aerosols from consumer products, allergens including dust mites, cat dander and cockroaches, pesticides, and gases and vapors from combustion sources. Environmental tobacco smoke is a common indoor pollutant associated with chronic respiratory infections and decrements in lung growth and development. In 1999-2000, 63 percent of white, non-Hispanic,

86 percent of black, non-Hispanic, and 49 percent of Mexican American children were exposed to detectable levels of blood cotinine, an indicator of tobacco smoke exposures (CDC, 2003).

Cockroach droppings or body parts play a significant role in asthma in many inner-city areas. In a study of seven U.S. metropolitan inner city areas skin test sensitization (an indicator of exposure) to cockroach was 69 percent overall and to dust mites was 62 percent. Cockroach allergens were highest in high-rise apartments, whereas dust mites allergen levels were highest in detached homes (Gruchalla et al., 2005). Other triggers of asthma include mold, animals, pollen, cold air, exercise, stress, and respiratory infections (NIEHS, 2006).

Chronic low-level exposure to lead measured in terms of blood lead levels is associated with cognitive deficits, developmental delays, behavioral problems, and diminished school performance at levels at least as low as 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$) (CDC, 1991; WHO, 1995; USEPA, 2003). Pooled data from several studies around the world suggest the impact level may be as low as 7.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ (Lanphear et al., 2005).

The elimination of leaded gasoline in many countries has reduced overall lead exposures, however studies of mining areas in Mexico indicate levels higher than five times the action limit of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ (CEC, 2006). In the United States lead-based paint in older homes is the primary source of childhood lead exposure. In developing countries, sources such as lead-oxide found in pottery glazes also represent a predominant exposure through food prepared and stored on the pottery.

Children are exposed to pesticides in soil, dust, and grass and through pesticide residues in food. Children of farm workers, pesticide applicators, and those living in agricultural areas are especially at risk. Key risks are cancer, birth defect, and damage to the nervous and endocrine systems (WHO, 2004). Organophosphate pesticides are used in the production of many foods consumed by children (USEPA, 2003). Between 1994 and 2000 the percentage of food samples in the United States with detectable levels of organophosphate pesticide residues ranged between 19 percent and 29 percent (CEC, 2006).

Childhood environmental health has become a focus of environmental research, agency initiatives, and public advocacy. Particularly in developing countries, environmental hazards and pollution are major contributors to childhood illnesses and disability. Further efforts are needed to better characterize the specific exposure mechanisms, developmental toxicity, and overall environmental risks associated with early childhood and to regulate these hazards in a manner protective of this vulnerable and precious life stage.

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Christine Rioux

Environments, Playground. *See* Playgrounds

Erikson, Erik H. (1902–1994)

Child psychoanalyst Erik Homburger Erikson was born on June 15, 1902, near Frankfurt, Germany's scientific and industrial center. His parents separated before his birth, and his mother left for Germany to be closer to friends living in Karlsruhe. When he was three years old, his mother married Dr. Homburger, the local pediatrician. Young Erikson spent his childhood with his Danish mother and Jewish stepfather in a comfortable home overlooking a beautiful castle and park, with ample space to run and play, in a town that would soon become an industrial center.

Erikson attended the local primary and secondary schools in Karlsruhe, where he studied Latin, Greek, literature, ancient history, and art all subjects in which he excelled. However, with regard to formal education he was not a good student. After graduating, he traveled through the Black Forest, and on to Munich and Florence in search of answers of what to do next with his life. Although he was unsuccessful in his initial attempt to formally study art, he returned to Karlsruhe at the age of 25 and prepared to study and teach art.

It was at that time that he received a letter from his close friend Peter Blos in Vienna. Blos had been tutoring the children of Dorothy Burlingham, an American studying with Sigmund and Anna Freud. The ladies, Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud, had offered Blos an opportunity to start his own school, and he recommended that Erikson join this venture. So in 1927, Erikson moved to Vienna, where he worked with Blos to start an experimental progressive school. His subsequent work with young children was influenced by Montessori's educational philosophy, and eventually led Erikson to study psychoanalysis in children as well as adults at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute.

In 1929, he met and married Joan Serson, who also joined the school's faculty. By 1933, Germany and Austria were having rough economic times, Hitler had taken office, and most Jewish analysts were fleeing to America. Erikson and his family also decided to leave Vienna, and he arrived in Boston where he established himself as the city's first child psychoanalyst, opening an office on Boston's Marlborough Street. He also took a position at Harvard Medical School, living and working in Cambridge for the next three years. In addition, he was asked to consult at the Judge Baker Guidance Center which was a clinic devoted to the diagnosis and treatment of children's emotional disorders. In 1936 he accepted the position of instructor at Yale Medical School, and then moved to California in 1939 where he resumed his analytic work with children in San Francisco, and his research in anthropology and history at Berkeley. After ten years in California Erikson moved back to the east coast and to Harvard University.

Erikson's work led him to study children in different cultural contexts, specifically poor children, including those from the Sioux and Yurok Native American tribes. This work inspired his attempts to demonstrate how the customs of a given society influence childhood and child-rearing traditions. Erikson was additionally fascinated by the way people like Luther and Mahatma Gandhi could exert a psychological influence on millions. He visited India in 1962 to lead a seminar on the human life cycle, which prompted his exploration on Gandhi's life.

Erikson published a great many articles and books including *Gandhi's Truth* and *Young Man Luther*. His most important work, *Childhood and Society* (1950), in which he maps out eight stages of psychosocial development in the human life, had a profound influence on the **social-emotional curriculum** in early childhood education. In 1969, in spite of never having earned a formal college degree, Erikson was offered a professorship at Harvard where he taught until his death in 1994. *See also* Child Art; Development, Psycho-Social Theory of.

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ERS. See Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales

Ethics. See Professional Ethics

European Early Childhood Education Research Journal (EECERJ)

The *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal (EECERJ)* is the journal of the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA). EECERA is an international organization dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of research in early childhood education throughout Europe and beyond. Its principal aims are the following:

- to provide a rigorous academic forum at a European level for the development and dissemination of high-quality research on early childhood education;
- to facilitate collaboration and cooperation between European researchers working in this field;
- to encourage the clear articulation and communication of the links between research and practice in early childhood education;
- to give mutual support and offer peer group interaction to researchers in early childhood education;
- to raise the visibility and status of research on early childhood education throughout Europe and beyond.

The *Journal of the Association* was launched in 1993 and has published two volumes each year since its launch. It is based at the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) at University of Worcester in Birmingham, UK, an internationally acknowledged centre of excellence in early childhood research and practice. The director of the Centre is the journal's Coordinating Editor and manages the journal refereeing and editorial process. The journal is currently published as an independent enterprise on behalf of the Association, but from January 2007 will be published through Taylor and Francis (Routledge). The journal's unique and distinguishing features include:

- an unbroken publication record since its launch twelve years ago;
- ownership and publication by a European based and focused early childhood research association;
- promotion of a European perspective on early childhood education and care within an international field;
- a multidisciplinary and multiprofessional focus in its remit which includes, but is not exclusively, sociological or psychological in its focus;
- an intention to establish a new discipline of early childhood educational research;
- the linking of research, policy and practice in early childhood;
- the promotion of new paradigms in early childhood research;
- a cross national and highly respected editorial board;
- a cross national and established readership;
- promotion at an annual conference of the Association;
- a rigorous cross national refereeing process;
- a cross national publishing policy;
- a rolling programme of editorial comment amongst senior European early childhood researchers;

- an increasing rate of paper submissions and a subsequent decreasing acceptance rate, indicating increasing quality in published papers;
- an increasing number of international library subscriptions;
- a profit-making margin in its publication.

Christine Pascal

Even Start

The Even Start Family Literacy Program is a U.S. federally funded program serving low-income families with young children, birth through seven years of age. The long-term goal of the Even Start program is to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy for eligible families by improving children's academic achievement and parents' literacy skills. The Even Start Family Literacy program consists of four key components: early childhood education, adult literacy, parenting education, and interactive literacy between parents and children (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The Even Start Family Literacy Program originally initiated in 1988 as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The program was then reauthorized by the Literacy Involves Families Together Act of 2000 and **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

The purpose of the Even Start program is to promote family self-sufficiency and improve child outcomes for targeted families. Families served by Even Start are typically extremely high need families. Even Start families have lower incomes, lower employment rates, and lower education levels than other families served by U.S. federal antipoverty programs such as **Head Start** (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Even Start programs serve English speaking families with low literacy levels as well as low-income families who are learning English as a second language.

Even Start services are provided throughout the United States. Federal grants are awarded to states and states then award local contracts to agencies serving high need children and families. In addition to the provision of state grants, Even Start programs are also operated specifically for Migrant and Native American populations. Even Start programs use a variety of service models including home visits for children and families, center-based early childhood education, and inter-generational parent-child literacy activities. In 2003, over 1,200 local Even Start programs were funded throughout the United States serving over 50,000 families (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Several national evaluations have been conducted on the effectiveness of the Even Start program. The most recent evaluation conducted in 2003 suggested that the impact of the program on children's outcomes was related to the participation rates of families in the Even Start program. However, children's literacy outcomes of randomly assigned Even Start families were no higher than those in the control group (St. Pierre et al., 2003). And yet, a previous national study and other small-scale studies have found improved literacy outcomes for young children (Ryan, 2005; Tao, Gamse, and Tarr, 1998). Current legislation in the United States requires that Even Start programs use scientifically based literacy practices. *See also* Literacy; National Even Start Association.

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Rena Hallam

Exchange

Exchange, formerly titled *Childcare Information Exchange*, has been a leading source of support, encouragement, and up-to-date information for leaders in early childhood programs worldwide since 1978. Each issue of *Exchange* provides practical ideas and strategies for dealing with the responsibilities and demands that directors face every day, such as the special needs of today's children, staff turnover, ever-increasing competition, uncertain public subsidies, abuse, accusations, recruitment, and training. In addition, *Exchange* helps directors prepare for the challenges they will encounter in the future, such as the changing fabric of the family unit, transformations in the workplace, the movement to find balance between work and family, and the increasing stresses placed upon our young children. Details available online at www.ChildCareExchange.com.

Bonnie Neugebauer and Roger Neugebauer

Experimental Designs. See Quantitative Analyses/Experimental Designs

F

Families

Early childhood educators have long embraced the idea that families are the first and foremost educational and socialization influence on children. The prevalence of this view has led to the development of early childhood programs and practices that help families promote children's well-being. Supportive assistance to families with young children historically has focused on parenting and the mother-child relationship. Since the 1980s, there has been growing interest in other types of family relationships, functions, and contexts.

Family Systems, Influences, and Contexts

Perspectives on families as contexts of early development have broadened to include more than the conventional focus on the mother-child relationship. Families are increasingly viewed as social systems because families typically are comprised of subsystems, including parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, relationships with extended family members, and marital or partner relationships. Change in one of these subsystems generally triggers a change in other systems. Marital discord, for example, is negatively associated with children's well-being (Cummings and Davies, 2002). Families are also viewed as social systems because the roles and functions of all family members are interdependent (Parke and Buriel, 1998). For example, a child's entry into an early childhood program is typically associated with shifts in the parent role, the parent-child relationship, and the child's relations with a sibling (e.g., less available as a playmate at home).

The question of whether participation in early childhood programs in the early years of life diminishes family effects on children's development has received considerable attention since the mid 1980s (Fein and Fox, 1988). Some early studies on this topic found that family factors were stronger predictors of children's outcomes when children were not enrolled in child care in the first year of their lives (Howes, 1990). More recent research with larger samples has found that the influence of family factors on children's outcomes is not weakened or altered by

extensive participation in nonparental child care beginning in infancy (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1998).

Although families represent many different structural forms, including single-parent families, a common theme across varying family types is the role of extended family members as a support system for young children and their parents. In the United States, for example, nearly one-half of all grandparents with young grandchildren living nearby provide some type of child-care assistance to their adult children. Slightly more than one-half of grandmothers and nearly 40 percent of grandfathers are involved in child-care roles (Guzman, 2004). Research in Sweden, the United States, Wales, and West Germany indicates that grandparents are an important part of social networks that provide information plus emotional and material assistance to parents and their young children (Cochran et al., 1990).

In addition to social networks, studies point to characteristics of parents' work environments, neighborhoods, and communities as well as socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity as key contributors to the quality of family child-rearing environments (Luster and Okagaki, 2005).

Program–Family Relationships

In most countries today, positive relationships between families and early childhood programs are considered to be a key element of program quality. Reasons for an emphasis on parent involvement, which vary by national histories and goals, include commitments to parental rights and responsibilities, interests in strengthening ties between families and communities, community development, employment for low-income parents, and empowering women to take more control of their lives (Cochran, 1993). The early childhood field has long functioned with the expectation that frequent, two-way communication in which parents and program staff share decision-making responsibilities for children's care and development will strengthen continuity between family and program, yielding improved outcomes for young children (Powell, 2001).

Productive relationships between early childhood program staff and parents are an integral part of some program models. Many municipal early childhood programs in **Italy** (see Volume 4), for example, consider parental engagement to be central to their philosophy, practices, and success. The concept of parental engagement in **Reggio Emilia** calls for parents and citizens to become intimately involved in the educational enterprise through trusting and reciprocal relations carried out through advisory councils and meetings at individual, classroom and school-wide levels. **Documentation** of children's behaviors and understandings also are a means of connecting with families. More generally in the United States, professional guidelines for **developmentally appropriate practice** in early childhood programs emphasize reciprocal relationships between families and programs.

Research on program–family relationships is limited. Studies conducted in the United States indicate that, overall, early childhood programs fall short of realizing frequent, two-way communications with parents (Powell, 2001). Research in other nations suggests that parents tend to desire an active role in programs (e.g., classroom aide or decision-making role on a preschool board) but that

teachers tend to prefer a more passive role for parents (e.g., recipients of professional advice and guidance; Boocock and Lerner, 1998).

Programs to Support Families

The early childhood field has a long history of providing programs of child-rearing information and social support to families. Program models vary in the extent to which they give attention primarily to the parent or to both child and parent, and in whether the program content focuses on child development exclusively or also incorporates support for other family functions such as meeting basic needs (e.g., housing and food) and adult literacy. Programs also vary in the use of home visiting and/or groups for engaging parents.

Parenting education efforts are prominent among programs aimed at providing supportive assistance to families with young children. An example is the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program, which originated in Israel in the 1960s (Lombard, 1994) and has been implemented and evaluated in seven countries (Westheimer, 2003). The HIPPY curriculum emphasizes early literacy skills developed through parent-child educational interactions. Parents are trained by paraprofessionals from their own communities who use role-playing as the primary means of instruction.

The growing interest in family systems has led to the development of programs that focus on more than the mother-child relationship. Some programs address the marital or adult partner relationship as it impinges on parenting, for example, and other programs seek to strengthen parents' own literacy skills while also giving attention to the parenting role and the quality of family connections with informal and formal supports in the community (Cowan, Powell, and Cowan, 1998).

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Douglas R. Powell

Family Child Care

Family Child Care is one of the diverse options for employed families in the United States for the early care and education of their children. Family Child Care refers to either nonparental or relative early care and education that is provided in a family child-care provider/educator's own home. The names kith and kin and relative care are given to family child care/educators who provide care and education for their own or relative's children. Family child-care providers/educators, in addition to offering safe and healthy environments that support the development of young children, serve as managers of their small business. Throughout the United States, a majority of families seeking out-of-home care bring their young children aged birth through five and often through school age to family home care providers. Current estimates suggest that more than 4 million children, including more than 25 percent of infants and toddlers, in early care and education can be found in family child care homes.

Advantages and Disadvantages for Families

For many families there are distinct advantages of family child-care homes in comparison with center-based care/education programs. These advantages include but are not limited to: fewer children/more individualized care/education; mixed ages of children; possibility for selecting caregivers with language and child-rearing practices similar to the family; location in a family home, thus less formal and school-like; sometimes lesser costs than center-based care; consistency of one care/educator; nutritious home-cooked food; flexible, more nontraditional hours, and possible emergency (temporary) services; possible location in family's neighborhood; care/education for multiple children in family; accessibility for children with special needs and school age children; and curriculum based on real life activities.

On the other hand, some families find disadvantages with care/education in family child-care homes that include but are not limited to: lack of consistency of quality, lack of standards (80-90 percent are nonregulated), multitasking of family care providers/educators who simultaneously care for children and engage in routine home maintenance tasks, isolation of family care providers/educators from other care/educators, lack of same supports and resources as child-care centers,

care of family care provider's/educator's own or relative children, lack of public perception of family care/educators as professional and neglect by the profession, and lack of age mates for their children. Families are also concerned that family care providers/educators may lack the professional training and resources to promote the physical, cognitive, social-emotional, communication, and creative development of the children in their care.

Quality of Family Child Care Homes

Despite the increasing numbers of children in family child care homes, the early care and education profession has directed the least amount of attention to this category of child care perhaps because family child care homes are private businesses and not as much in the eye of the public as child care centers. Until the 1990s, there were fewer research studies, publications, and journal articles addressing issues relating to family child care than there were about child-care centers. Reasons for lack of research include the lack of visibility of family child care/educators, the informality of the setting as compared to educational centers, lack of willingness of family child care providers/educators to participate in research, and the turnover rate of family child care/educators. These studies that have been conducted and the publications detailing the findings of the research have focused on understanding both the context of family child care and the quality issues related to family child care.

Quality in child care for all types of programs including family child care is a continuous discussion in the early childhood profession. According to a recent synthesis of research, findings suggest that "high quality child care programs promote children's cognitive development (for example, language and math skills), foster children's social skills (interactions with other children, behavior management, for example), and encourage higher levels of school readiness." Weaver (2002, pp. 16-20) suggests that, on the basis of this research, there are numerous identified characteristics of "master providers" which significantly impact the quality of care/education in a family child care home. These factors include: regulation through licensing, a life long learning disposition, a high level of "psychological well-being," a commitment to the child-care profession, established and varied community connections, and dependable financial resources.

Family child care/educators throughout the United States have access to a variety of regulatory systems and opportunities for professional development. Some states mandate regulations and other states offer options of licensing or registering. Licensing offices, food programs, and resource and referral programs are just three of the many monitoring systems available for family child care. In addition to state regulations that typically focus on safety and health issues, family child care/educators have other tools available to review the quality of their programs. Harms and Clifford (1989) developed *The Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS)* for family child care/educators themselves to rate the comprehensive quality of their home or as an instrument for an outsider to observe. Family child care/educators can also seek accreditation through the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC).

Many family child care/educators have not had formal training in early childhood education, child development, health, safety, and nutrition, family and community collaboration, business management, and other areas related to family child care. Options for professional development for family child care/educators include but are not limited to: resource and referral agencies, community colleges and universities, specific state training programs, and local, state, and national conferences. There may be fewer options available to family child care/educators in rural areas. In addition to enhancing knowledge and skills, professional development opportunities provide opportunities for family child care/educators to network with others. Some states/communities establish networks of family child care to diminish the isolation that family child care/educators experience by working in their homes.

Summary

As the number of working families increases and family child-care homes become the choice for many families, the early childhood profession will have to focus efforts on further understanding the context and quality of family child-care homes. In the absence of national policies to insure affordable, accessible, high-quality early care and education programs, there are efforts in many states to require higher standards and more rigorous licensing requirements for family child-care providers. Research efforts are important to learn about developmental outcomes for young children who participate in family child care/education and to influence public policy regarding family child care/education.

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Nancy Baptiste

Family Literacy

Family literacy is a phrase that is used to describe the intergenerational development of literacy within families. Family literacy services or programs refer to sponsored programs in which more than one generation of a family participates in activities designed to promote literacy in the home, school, or community. The term was first used by Taylor (1983) to describe the meanings and uses of literacy in families. Wasik and Herrmann (2004) describe the phrase as referencing “literacy beliefs and practices among family members and the intergenerational transfer of literacy to children” (p. 3).

Family literacy appears in several federal laws, including the *Workforce Investment Act*; the *Reading Excellence Act*; the *Community Opportunities, Accountability, and Training and Educational Services Act (Head Start Reauthorization)*; and the *Family Literacy Federal Work-Study Waiver*. The **No Child Left Behind Act** contains numerous references to family literacy and parent involvement, including articulation of the William F. Goodling **Even Start** Family Literacy Program. As stipulated in these laws, many federally funded programs, such as Head Start, Reading First, and Early Reading First are required to include a family literacy component. It is an approved expenditure for several other programs, including Title I preschool programs, education of migratory children programs, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The federal definition used in these statutes reads as follows:

services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family and that integrate all the following activities:

- (A) Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.
- (B) Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- (C) Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- (D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

Other definitions of family literacy found in the professional literature vary in their emphasis. Some scholars (Morrow, 1995) emphasize an empowerment model that expands upon the definition of what counts as family literacy. This model goes beyond an emphasis on direct parent-child interactions around literacy tasks to include parents or other caregivers working independently on reading and writing, using literacy to address family and community problems, addressing child-rearing concerns through family literacy class, supporting the development of their home language and culture, and interacting with the school system regarding children's early learning.

From a social constructivist perspective (Neuman, Celano, and Fisher, 1996), programs that support family literacy are not about changing people; rather, they are about offering choices and opportunities for families. Parents come to family literacy programs with life experiences and family stories that should be honored and used in program development. Family literacy is about providing context, resources, and opportunities for families that allow them to demonstrate what they already know and can do. To be effective, family literacy programs must be responsive to parents' needs and interests. From this perspective, family literacy is about power.

Research on family literacy has expanded understandings of the potentials of these various sources of support. For example, a recent study explored the meaning family literacy programs had for participants. Family members acknowledged its potential to improve their abilities to help, encourage, and read to their children, as one mother noted. "Before [family literacy] I thought reading was just reading. Now I know it's also talking and asking questions" (Handel, 1999, p. 135). Participants also focused on their own learning, including opportunities

to interact with other adults, the quality of the materials and teaching staff. Another participant noted how willing people were to help her, describing the school “like a relative” (p. 138) to her. She eagerly responded to their offers of assistance. The women expressed the idea that the program reflected their personal values and life experiences. From the participant perspective, family literacy can replace negative educational experiences with positive educational experiences that can change parent attitudes about their children’s educational opportunities.

A comprehensive family literacy model includes all four components listed in the federal definition (adult basic education, age-appropriate education for children, parenting education, and parent-child literacy activities) in a fully integrated and unified package. Adult educators collaborate with early childhood teachers and parent educators to plan and deliver the programs that are located together. Through such an integration of services, families have an opportunity to break out of intergenerational patterns of poverty to achieve economic self-sufficiency while concurrently boosting their ability to support the literacy development of their children. Comprehensive family literacy programs that have developed and served as models over the past twenty years include the Parent and Child Education Program (PACE), the Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project, and Even Start—a federally funded family literacy model program.

Family literacy services or programs generally represent a continuum of options, ranging from the fully integrated comprehensive model to programs that engage family members from multiple generations in one or more literacy activities concurrent with the services provided to individual family members (e.g., early childhood educators use parent volunteers to read books to children or adult education programs that offer monthly family picnics with oral storytelling). Programs that systematically take a family-focused approach, integrating two or more components, can typically be found in libraries, community centers, family resource centers, adult basic education programs, Head Start programs, and many other community-based programs. They can be ongoing in nature or limited to single events. Adult educators recognize that family literacy programs differ from traditional adult literacy programs in that they are designed to maximize the probability that adults who receive literacy education will actually succeed in transferring aspects of their new beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and skills across generations to their children.

Family literacy programs can also be found within schools. The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) supports an initiative to develop school-based family literacy programs. In this program, school personnel can apply a gradual phasing-in approach to family literacy. In pilot projects using this model, elementary teachers began by bringing parents into their classrooms for parent-child literacy activities. They expanded these efforts so parents could attend adult education classes during the day in the elementary school building, occasionally breaking to participate in structured parent-child literacy activities. The NCFL website, <http://famlit.org>, offers details and information about this program.

When offered with sufficient quality, intensity, and duration, family literacy programs can be effective in breaking cycles of illiteracy. Data from more than sixty NCFL sites across fourteen states that enrolled more than 2,000 families over a five-year period indicate changes in several critical areas. Families remained

active in family literacy programs longer and attended more frequently than those in typical adult-focused programs, literacy activity in the home increased, and adults showed significant gains in language and math skills (NCFL, 1996). A comparison study involving over 500 former Even Start families up to six years after program exit (NCFL, 1997) also found many positive results for both children and adults. For children, findings showed that 90 percent had earned satisfactory grades in reading, language, and mathematics. For adults, 54 percent of those seeking educational credentials had earned a GED or high school certification, 40 percent continued to make educational progress by enrolling in higher education or training programs, and 45 percent increased their self-sufficiency by reducing or eliminating their dependence on public assistance. A research synthesis on family literacy programs confirmed findings that family literacy participants have increased positive child and adult outcomes (Tracey, 1994).

Since early childhood education is a critical component of family literacy, it is important that the quality and nature of it be consistent with effective programs. Research on preschool programs for children living in poverty consistently indicates that compensatory programs isolated from strong parent components will not provide children with long-term educational benefits. More can be achieved for both children and parents by offering family literacy programs than can be achieved by traditional age-based service delivery models. Parent levels of education are closely related to child achievement in school. Drawing from research on high-quality early childhood classrooms, Dickinson, St. Pierre, and Pettengill (Wasik, 2004) conclude that increasing a family's ability to support child development produces the maximum potential impact on long-term language and literacy achievement of the children.

Family literacy programs reflect the belief that the primary source for learning continues to be the family. Families live and interact within the context of their communities. Communities provide a wide array of educational and cultural resources of varying quality that can and do contribute to the literacy of residents within the area, such as public schools, libraries, theatrical productions, and so forth. Nevertheless, the family remains the most fundamental learning environment in the lives of young children. The concept of family literacy then refers to the role the family plays in helping all its members grow and develop into educated citizens ready to contribute to the family, the community, and the nation—as members of the workforce, as leaders in the community, and as guides for the next generation.

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Web Site: National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), <http://www.familit.org/> NCFL is the primary national organization for family literacy and provides basic information on family literacy, policy and research information, training and technical assistance, family literacy in the schools, and the Family Literacy Alliance. The Web site offers links to many other related Web resources.

Susan Benner

Family Systems Theory (FST)

Family Systems Theory (FST) describes principles of family functioning believed to be true for all families. It is one example of a larger **developmental systems theory** orientation that has been applied widely to the natural and social sciences. Simply put, systems theory studies the relationships of parts to wholes, parts to parts, and describes change therein. Thus, Family Systems Theory describes how various family members relate to each other and—importantly—to the whole, and describes the ways in which families accommodate change. Early childhood educators have long recognized the importance of understanding the family as the primary context for the child's development. Educators place high value on communicating with family members, particularly parents; and on fostering strong connections between home and school. Thus, early childhood education is strengthened by understanding family dynamics, and FST elucidates these dynamics.

When FST was first developed in the mid-twentieth century, “family” usually meant a mother, father, and their biological children living under the same roof. When educators examined the family, it was usually to identify the things parents—especially the mother—did to “cause” the child to behave in certain ways. Later, the field recognized that the direction of effect goes both ways: young children affect parents as much as parents affect children, and attention was directed toward these “bi-directional influences.” FST became the next step in understanding families by describing the ways in which the entire family functioned. This is a critical perspective for the twenty-first century because families have become much more complex. Currently, the concept of “family” has changed to include blended families after divorce and remarriage, foster families, single-parent families, families parented by gay and lesbian couples, and homeless families. In addition, educators are teaching children of families from a vast number of cultural and religious contexts. The increasing complexity of families makes it even more important to understand how they work.

The following are six basic principles of Family Systems Theory, including their application to early childhood education:

1. **A family system is an organized whole and all parts of the whole—members of the family—are linked and interdependent.** Families have identifying traits (e.g., “Her family is very close-knit”). When something happens that affects one member of a family, the family as a whole changes and thus all family members are affected. The child cannot be understood outside the context of the family, so early childhood

educators benefit from learning as much as they can about the family structure and values of the children in their centers and classrooms.

2. **There are identifiable subsystems within the family.** Such as the parent subsystem, the sibling subsystem, or the grandparent subsystem. The young child may be a member of a number of subsystems. These subsystems also have implicit rules that govern their behavior. For example, in the early childhood setting, the sibling subsystem might be relied upon for children having trouble separating from their parents.
3. **There are boundaries around family subsystems and around the whole family, and there are rules that govern the behavior of the family and its subsystems.** These boundaries define how people interact and who is considered part of the family or subsystem. Boundaries can be strong and impermeable (e.g., “In our family the parents make the rules and the children follow them”), or weak and permeable (e.g., “In our family the older children and parents talk about family rules together”). Early childhood educators must be aware of where the boundaries are drawn; for example, the oldest sibling may have an important status within the sibling subsystem, or the grandparents may have ultimate authority. Obviously, boundaries and rules are very dependent on the cultural background of specific families.
4. **Patterns of interaction between individuals and between subsystems are circular rather than linear.** It is not useful to think about one member “causing” another member to behave in a certain way. Rather, individual members influence other members who, in turn, influence still others and the family as a whole. The family constantly changes in a spiral-like pattern. For the early childhood educator, for example, rather than blaming the father for being “too strict,” it is more useful to think of the parent and child creating a system in which child behavior and father behavior influence each other which, in turn, influences the other family members and the whole.
5. **Family systems have features that maintain their stability or equilibrium, and when something happens to alter a pattern, the family tries to return to the previous stable state.** An example of this might be a family with a child identified with ADHD who requires a lot of attention. Intervention might cause the child’s behavior to change and become more typical. But it may be easier to continue to think of the child as the designated “problem child” because things were more predictable that way for the parents, who had established ways of interacting with the child, and also for the child, who was accustomed to receiving a great deal of parental and family attention and resources.
6. **Families are always changing.** When something happens to one member, the entire family as a whole must also change, in addition to the individuals and various subsystems. This happens in obvious ways, such as when a new baby is born or adopted into the family or when a primary caregiver goes to work, but also in subtle and less visible ways, such as when a parent finishes a graduate program or an older sibling learns to drive. Early childhood educators must be aware of these changes because they change the place of the young child in the family and the ways in which family members relate to each other.

Many theorists have contributed to the development of Family Systems Theory, drawing upon philosophical traditions going back many centuries. It is a theory that is still changing. It is an especially well-known and useful perspective

for therapists and developmental psychologists. Many credit Murray Bowen (1913–1990) with first describing FST as we know it today. Bowen, a psychiatrist, conducted a research project at the National Institute of Mental Health in the 1950s in which he examined families with a schizophrenic member longitudinally over a five-year period. He described the ways in which the family member with schizophrenia influenced other family members, and the ways in which changes in family functioning influenced the ill family member as well as other members. He explained this in a widely read book, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, published in 1978. Esther Thelen was another contributor to systems theory as it relates to self and other, publishing a major work on the topic in 1989 in the *Minnesota Symposium on Child Psychology*. She was perhaps best known for applying and popularizing dynamic systems theory to the study of child development. Arnold Sameroff, a developmental theoretician and researcher, wrote about family systems in a chapter published in the first volume of the *Handbook of Child Psychology* in 1983. He is perhaps best known for explaining the impact of changes over time by describing “transactional analysis” as it relates to FST. And perhaps the most extensive contributions to our current understandings of FST (particularly as it impacts family therapy) comes from the work of Patricia and Salvador Minuchin, therapists who defined the basic principles of FST in numerous publications in psychology, beginning in the 1970s and continuing today.

Only recently has FST been applied in any detail to early childhood education. In January 2006, Linda Christian published an article in *Young Children*, the journal of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), describing some principles of FST and giving examples of how the principles can be applied to practice in the early childhood setting.

Very few cross-cultural examinations of FST have been conducted, and therefore the claim that its principles apply to all families has not been demonstrated. Yet the principles are general and common to all systems, and thus are assumed to have ecological validity. In addition, FST has been criticized for describing *what* goes on in families but not *how* change occurs; in other words, the theory lacks a way of showing mechanisms of family change. Clearly, studying the family is difficult and complex, and there will always be much to examine. Nevertheless, Family Systems Theory has added a great deal to our understanding of this critical context for the socialization and education of young children. *See also* Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; Families; Gay or Lesbian Parents, Children with; Parents and Parent Involvement.

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Martha Pott

FAS. See Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Fathers

Thirty years ago, fathers were called “the forgotten contributors to child development” (Lamb, 1975). No longer forgotten, fathers today are acknowledged as competent caregivers who can play a unique role in their children’s development. In the mid-twentieth century, psychoanalytic theories of child development were popular, and forwarded a view that fathers were not central to a child’s development during the first years of a child’s life. The father’s role, it was believed, was at first indirect, in supporting mothers as primary caregivers. In the United States, fewer mothers than today were employed outside the home in the paid workforce, and were more often at-home primary caregivers. Later, beyond infancy, the father’s role was seen as more direct, in encouraging children to separate from their mothers, and to develop independence. Today, we recognize that infants and their fathers form special relationships from birth. Research has shown that infants develop **attachments** to their fathers from the beginning of life, and that many men are involved in the lives of their young children in many ways.

Positive fathering behaviors that include being both available and involved are associated with favorable development in children. Fathering characterized by warmth, clear communications, and high expectations for children is often linked with more positive development in children, at least in “mainstream” U.S. families. The beneficial effects of positive fathering have been demonstrated in areas such as children’s academic achievement, empathy, self-esteem, self-control, well-being, life skills, and **social competence**. Positive fathering is not just the amount of time that fathers spend with their children; it involves warmth and sensitivity, economic support, monitoring of children’s activities, and the beliefs that fathers have about child development and fathering.

Fathers often are characterized as “playmates,” spending a greater percent of their time with their children in **play** activities, compared with mothers. Father-child play is often physical, or “rough and tumble,” especially during the early years. One feature of this kind of play is that there are “emotional highs and lows”; the play can bring shrieks of joy and laughter or, sometimes, tears. Fathers, then, may play a special role in the development of children’s emotion regulation, since this kind of play provides opportunities for children to learn and practice skills or behaviors for coping with strong emotions (positive or negative). Paternal involvement in early childhood also is associated with empathy development, both in childhood and adulthood.

The development of children’s social skills as successful participants in peer and other relationships beyond the family can also be affected by father involvement. Warm, face-to-face interactions can promote the acquisition of social skills necessary for peer relationships. Similar to the influence of a positive mother-child

attachment, a positive father-child attachment can influence social adaptation. In general, children with secure attachments are more liked by others, exhibit higher levels of self-esteem, and have better social skills. When the father monitors his child's social relationships, as a mentor or guide, he is able to educate his child on appropriate social patterns and behaviors necessary for the promotion of peer relationships.

Fathers also seem to have a special role in children's **cognitive development**. Research shows that father involvement is associated with children's learning, cognitive achievement, and academic success in school. Children of involved fathers also are more likely to believe that they have some control over events, and may show greater verbal performance, perhaps in part due to high educational expectations when fathers are involved in children's school performance.

Becoming a father is a life-changing experience for men and contributes to a man's own development. Involved fathers have been shown to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, and satisfaction, both personally and within their parental role. Men who are involved fathers also are more involved in their communities, making greater social connections. Father involvement also affects marital stability and satisfaction. The ways in which a man fathers are affected by other things in his life, including the relationship that he has with the mother of his child, his relationships with his own parents, especially his father, his employment, and other institutional supports and barriers to positive fathering.

While the average age of U.S. men at the birth of their first child has remained relatively stable in recent years (29.7 years), other trends in the changing demographics of the United States affect fathers and children. Rates of divorce and nonmarital births have risen substantially in recent decades. Subsequently, the number of children living without their fathers in residence has increased by some 14 million, from 10 million in 1960 to 24 million in 2005. Past research on nonresidential fathers shows that they have less influence over their children and child-rearing decisions, and that these fathers spend the majority of the time with their children engaging in leisure play activities. Father-headed single parent families also have steadily increased in the last half-century. The number of residential single fathers living with their children has increased from 393,000 in 1970 to 2.3 million in 2004, and men currently comprise 19 percent of single residential parents. Single-parent fathers face many of the same challenges that single-parent mothers do, and in general, prove to be as competent in the role of primary caregiver. As divorce rates have increased so has the rate of remarriage and stepfathering. Stepfathers face unique challenges, particularly with regard to establishing disciplining patterns. Stepfathers who do not have biological children tend to develop better relationships with their stepchildren; perhaps they have more time for involvement with their stepchildren. When a stepfather becomes a part of a new family system, biological fathers tend to reduce their involvement both socially and economically with their children.

Many children in the United States grow up without the stable, consistent involvement of their biological fathers. Recent surveys show that 40 percent of children with nonresidential, biological fathers have not seen their fathers in at least one year, and an estimated two-thirds of nonresidential fathers do not pay child support. The implications of this trend are substantial, as these children are

more likely to experience **poverty**, perform poorly in school, engage in criminal activity, and abuse drugs and alcohol. Among men in state prisons, 55 percent are fathers of children under the age of 18. Recent studies have shown that nearly 3 percent of U.S. children (2.1 million nationwide) under the age of 18 have fathers who are incarcerated. The effects of having an incarcerated parent on children may include impaired parent-child bonding and socioemotional development, as well as reactive behaviors and an intergenerational cycle of crime and incarceration. Rates of incarcerated fathers vary across racial groups. Studies show that while 1.2 percent of non-Hispanic white children have a father who is incarcerated, 3.5 percent of Hispanic children, and 9.1 percent of non-Hispanic black children have an incarcerated father.

As we begin to recognize the complexity of paternal involvement, as well as recent changes in fathering trends, policies, and programs have been developed to support fathers' development and involvement in their children's lives. A host of programs at the federal, state, and local levels aim to support positive fathering. At the federal level, for example, the Bush Administration's Fatherhood Initiative, the Health and Human Services Department, and the Family and Youth Services Bureau have proposed programs to strengthen the role of the fathers, programs to assist noncustodial fathers become more involved in their children's lives, and programs that provide mentoring for children of prisoners. *See also* Development, Emotional; Development, Social; Incarcerated Parents, Children of; Peers and Friends.

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M. Ann Easterbrooks and Cynthia R. Davis

Feminism in Early Childhood Education

Feminism is the worldwide struggle to end sexist oppression. Often misunderstood as a radical push to make women equal to men in our society (i.e., "women's lib"), feminism does not aim for social equity; rather, the emphasis is on ending sexist oppression for all women. Although in industrialized countries white middle-class women have made significant strides in gaining access to education and economy, most women throughout the world continue to suffer under male control. In the broadest sense, feminism is the political movement for global gender equality. It is one of the most powerful struggles for social justice in the modern world and is becoming more and more recognized and established within the educational community.

Across educational settings, sexist oppression is perhaps most visible in early childhood. The predominance of female teachers within this field is illustrative of the long-standing social belief that working with young children is women's work, and that women are instinctively good at teaching because they innately

love children. Furthermore, it is widely held that women are by nature maternal beings and thus provide nurturing mother-images in classrooms; male teachers, on the other hand, provoke harsh, authoritative father-images. By juxtaposing females as maternal and soft against males who are abrasive and punishing, women are socially positioned as the weaker sex. A significant objective of feminist research in early childhood education is the deconstruction of this sexist definition of teaching. A great deal of current feminist work focuses on what being both a woman and a teacher of young children means within present-day United States society.

The work of Robin Leavitt (1994) is a hallmark example of feminist work in early childhood education. Leavitt challenges the “teacher = mother” notion, revealing sexist power structures that keep female teachers marginalized. She explains that, regardless of how instinctive or innate teaching and loving children may appear to be for women, the emotional investment that is required of teachers is not natural. Rather, she says, it is bought and sold labor:

The emotional labor of the caregivers is complex, as they are expected to develop a sense of investment in each child that enables them to sustain caring throughout the day and over time, but also each day release children to their parents. In short, caregivers are expected to emotionally engage intensely, and disengage gracefully, and do both upon demand. (p. 61).

Feminism also challenges the gendered nature of that which is considered to be acceptable knowledge in early childhood education. Worth considerable note is that, despite the fact that approximately 98 percent of early childhood teachers are female, the predominant theories upon which most practices are based were generated by men. Friedrich **Froebel**, John **Dewey**, Lev **Vygotsky**, Jean **Piaget**, Sigmund **Freud** and Arnold **Gesell** are frequently referenced as sources for the field’s knowledge base. While there are many females who have made a mark on early childhood education (e.g., Maria **Montessori**, Elizabeth **Peabody**, Patti Smith **Hill**, Constance Kamii, to name a few), the overall early childhood philosophy is dominated by male worldviews. This notion is underscored in the field’s written history, such that **kindergarten** has a *father* (i.e., Froebel) but not a mother.

Feminist ideology challenges the structure of the traditional “malestream” approach to early childhood education (Coffey and Delamont, 2000) and suggests alternative classroom practices via inquiry into curriculum content and the establishment of classroom communities with democratic values—in other words, a feminist pedagogy. Feminist pedagogy is the political effort aimed at dismantling the masculine culture of power in education and building instead a society which benefits and values all students and all knowledge, not just that of males. In this approach to education, stereotypic female traits that keep women socially marginalized (e.g., care) are repositioned as strengths (e.g., an intellectual and moral relationship). Feminist teachers maintain an awareness of male privilege in education—and society in general—and work to develop an education appropriate for women. For instance, within this approach life histories and personal stories are recognized as valid ways of knowing. Within early childhood settings,

feminist pedagogy is represented by supporting gender-free play zones, encouraging the boys, for example, to help take care of the babies in the dramatic play area and creating spaces that invite and support girls' efforts in the block corner. Some educators strategically move those two traditionally separate play spaces so that they are integrated, thereby discouraging easy gendered segregation of children's play activities and social relations.

A central challenge to the feminist movement in education, however, is the lack of any unified, consistent definition of, or theoretical approach to feminism; rather, there are "feminisms." Because of the broad and often misinterpreted conceptualization of feminism, teachers are discouraged from using the term as a form of personal or political identity. It is encouraged, instead, that teachers "advocate feminism" in their practice, noting that "the foundation of future feminist struggle must be solidly based on a recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural basis and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression" (hooks, 2000, p. 33). *See also* Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education.

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Candra Thornton

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is one of the main threats to child health. FAS is a set of birth defects associated with prenatal alcohol exposure. This is distinguished from fetal alcohol effect (FAE), which is a less severe manifestation of the same symptoms of FAS. The pertinent questions become the etiology and the relationship between alcohol exposure during pregnancy and birth outcome. In 1968, a French article published by Dr. Paul Lemoine reported on a study of 127 children born to alcoholic parents. These children showed anomalies such as peculiar facial features, psychomotor disturbances, and a high frequency of malformations. Lemoine believed that the similarities between the children's features could help diagnose maternal alcoholism. However, it was not until five years later

that the term “fetal alcohol syndrome” was coined; the credit was given to Dr. Kenneth Jones and Dr. David Smith discovering FAS since the French publication was not well known prior to the publication of their research in the United States (Armstrong, 2003).

There are four main criteria for medical diagnosis of FAS. The first of the criteria is confirmed maternal alcohol exposure. This is characterized by excessive intake of alcohol on a regular basis or episodically. Evidence of such actions can include frequent episodes of intoxication; legal problems related to drinking; development of tolerance or withdrawal from alcohol; social problems related to drinking; or alcohol-related medical problems such as hepatic disease. The second of the criteria is evidence of facial anomalies characteristic of FAS. This includes short palpebral fissures and facial anomalies in the premaxillary zone such as flat upper lip, flattened philtrum, and flat midface. The newborn’s nose may be short and upturned with a low and broad bridge. The ears may be large, low-set, and rotated posteriorly. Anomalies of the eyes may also be characteristic of FAS (e.g., ptosis, strabismus, microphthalmia, and epicanthic folds). Also, the upper and lower jawbones can be underdeveloped. The third of the criteria is evidence of growth retardation. These growth retardations includes at least one of the following: low birth weight for gestational age, disproportionately low weight for height, or decelerating weight over time that is not due to malnutrition. The final criterion is evidence of central nervous system neurodevelopmental abnormalities. This includes at least one of the following: decreased cranial size at birth, structural brain abnormalities, or neurological hard or soft signs (Armstrong, 2003).

It may not be possible to determine at-risk levels of alcohol consumption since there are other factors that affect pregnancy outcomes. Factors such as genetic susceptibility, pattern of exposure, time of embryo/fetal exposure, and type of alcohol can all affect the outcomes. Environmental and biological factors can work together to produce the effects of FAS on the newborn, which can start while in utero. In utero exposure to alcohol can produce fetal central nervous system depression, bone cell anomalies, as well as symptoms of fetal asphyxia such as decreased blood oxygen content and breathing activity; acidosis; and flattening of EEG activity. In some instances, the alcohol exposure can lead to death (Abel, 1984).

There are several risk factors that contribute to the occurrence of FAS. The pattern of alcohol consumption can affect FAS occurrence. Differences in the susceptibility to alcohol have been proposed for higher incidences of FAS. Poverty can be another major factor that contributes to FAS. Poverty can lead to adverse conditions such as poor maternal nutrition and health and increased stress (e.g., unemployment, marital instability, decreased access to prenatal care), which can interact with alcohol to produce negative pregnancy outcomes. Aside from environmental factors, biological factors such as cellular processing of alcohol can also increase risk in producing a child with FAS (Abel and Hannigan, 1996).

It has been estimated that 2,000–12,000 children are born with FAS every year in the United States. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has identified rates ranging from nine cases per 10,000 births among whites to six cases per 10,000 births among blacks to 29.9 cases per 10,000 births among American Indians. The range varies because there is no biological marker to diagnose FAS.

Facial abnormalities, which are the most distinctive markers of FAS, may change with age, become less noticeable, and some may be harder to distinguish due to racial phenotypes (Armstrong, 2003).

Children, families, and educators can be challenged by the effects of FAS on behavioral, psychological, and cognitive processing due to abnormalities in the brain and central nervous system. Central nervous system problems can include hyperactivity, diminished intelligence (average IQ of 70, with a range from 45 to 110), learning disabilities, inappropriate social behaviors, delays in speech and language, impaired hearing, poor eating (leading to failure to thrive) and sleeping patterns, longer reaction time, and delayed developmental milestones. These various problems can be addressed through support systems in place by parents, medical professionals, and **early intervention**. Interventions can address environmental issues that may complicate matters such as organizing living environments to reduce clutter, which can relax the child. Building consistent daily routines for a child with FAS can also provide alleviations of behavioral problems. Careful, repetitive teaching of appropriate behaviors and clear, immediate rewards can also provide the child with FAS structure to learn appropriate social skills. In order to address learning issues, it may be necessary for parents to collaborate with educators to plan lessons and activities that utilize all the senses for learning (Morse and Weiner, 1996).

Prevention may need to take place on the level of the federal and state governments. The government may step in to regulate the availability of alcohol and educate the consumers of the dangers of drinking while pregnant. States may also need to take responsibility in informing the public of the dangers of drinking while pregnant. The first step to change in the United States came in 1988 in which alcoholic beverages were required to carry health-warning labels of the dangers of drinking while pregnant. Evaluation of the information and education campaigns must also take place to understand the impact of the campaigns of raising awareness of the possible dangers and whether the information had an impact on drinking practices during pregnancy.

Apart from educational campaigns, benefits can be observed from initiating counseling for pregnant women on the effects of alcohol use on the unborn child and the repercussions after the child is born. Dr. Henry L. Rosett initiated the first program of this type at Boston City Hospital in 1974. Women who attended the prenatal clinic were interviewed during their first visit to record diet, smoking, and alcohol/drug habits. Those classified as heavy drinkers were then encouraged to return to the clinic for counseling. The counseling approached the women to stress the positive side of abstaining or decreasing alcohol consumption rather than emphasizing the negative effects. As seen, it is necessary to focus prevention and intervention on the level of the family, environment, and community in order to improve recovery and abstinence (Rosett et al., 1978).

Legal issues arise in cases that surround the issue of FAS. One legal issue surrounds the idea of exposing the fetus to alcohol as a type of **child abuse and neglect**. The question arises around the issue of maternal rights in comparison to fetal rights. Questions also arise in the obligations of the obstetricians who treat pregnant patients with potential alcohol problems. Is an obstetrician obligated to advise pregnant women not to drink if he suspects alcoholism? Can the doctor be

charged with negligence if he fails to warn his patient? During such difficult legal circumstances, the court may become arbiters in deciding the extent and quality of prenatal care.

Many children with FAS require **early intervention** and special education services. Children with FAS have various needs that must be met: learning disabilities, emotional problems, behavioral issues, or multiple conditions. Assessments may be needed in speech and language, occupational therapy, and cognitive functioning to measure a child's strengths and deficits. Children with the condition may have various educational issues such as hyperactivity, distractibility, poor memory, decreased cognitive abilities, and poor social skills. Up to the age of 3, early intervention services can be used by families of children with FAS. The staff works with the families to create an **Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)** to describe the child's needs and the services the child and family will receive in order to address those needs. Once a child becomes school-aged, educational staff works with families to develop an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** to meet the individual needs of the child with FAS. The curriculum should include hands-on learning, multiple modes of learning, flexibility of scheduling, and consistency in teaching to promote sensory development and social and life skills development in addition to meeting academic goals agreed upon by the teacher and family.

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Web Site: National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS), <http://www.nofas.org/>.

Sonia Susan Issac

Frank, Lawrence Kelso (1890–1968)

Over the years of a multifaceted career, Lawrence Kelso Frank sowed novel research ideas and brought these ideas to fruition by linking groups of professionals with funding. As lecturer, organizer, and disseminator of ideas, Frank escalated research in human development.

Lawrence Kelso Frank was born on December 6, 1890, in Cincinnati, Ohio. He received his bachelor's degree in economics from Columbia University in 1912 where he was strongly influenced by progressive educator John Dewey. As a student, Frank worked for the Bureau of Social Research in New York City, where he grew increasingly interested in human welfare. After graduation, he was a systems analyst for the New York Telephone Company, a position that brought

him in contact with Wesley Clair Mitchell and his wife, Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell, along with Caroline Pratt and Harriet Johnson, began the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE) in 1916, the aim of which was to bring various specialists and research together in an experimental educational environment. Frank himself believed that early investments of healthy social interactions at the nursery school level could prevent future interpersonal problems. He was impressed with the BEE and sent his own children to its City and Country School and served on its Working Council.

By 1920, Frank was business manager for the New School for Social Research and soon thereafter developed a vision for systematic research of children's developmental growth. In 1923, his dreams were realized when he was appointed associate director in charge of expending over \$1,000,000 per year for the benefit of children through the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM). Under Frank's leadership, LSRM funds established the child study institute at Teachers College (1924), the child study center at the University of Minnesota (1925), and the Institute of Child Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley (1927). The existing Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, the Clinic of Child Development at Yale, and other research centers were also enhanced through the LSRM. Frank additionally gave funds to the Committee of Child Development in 1925, predecessor to the Society for Research in Child Development.

From 1931 to 1936, Frank was associate director for the General Education Board through which he supported research into the needs of the whole child. Frank believed that effective early childhood programs were founded upon the comprehensive needs of children and held tremendous potential to affect society for good. From 1936 to 1942, he was vice president of the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation, an agency devoted to general health research. Frank held posts during both world wars, serving on the War Industries Board of the Bureau of Planning and Statistics (1918-1919) and as Secretary of the Scientific Committee of the National Resources Planning Board and consultant to the Office of War Information in 1944.

A long-standing Progressive Education Association member, he directed the association's Caroline Zachry Institute of Human Development (1945-1950) and utilized General Education Board grants for continued study of personality development. Frank was coawarded the National Committee for Mental Hygiene's Lasker Award in 1947 for contributions to mental health and a 1950 *Parents Magazine* book award for his *How to Help Your Child in School*, coauthored with his third wife, Mary Frank. As a retiree, Frank lectured at several colleges, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Merrill-Palmer, and Harvard. He served as a trustee for Wheelock College and **Bank Street College**, held numerous positions within thirteen professional associations, and authored several articles and books on the behavioral and social sciences. Frank died on September 23, 1968.

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Charlotte Anderson

Freud, Anna (1895–1982)

Anna Freud is considered to be the originator of child psychoanalysis. She was born in Vienna, the youngest of six children of Sigmund Freud and his wife Martha. Her mother left the children with a nanny and took a “vacation” of several months soon afterward. She had a lifetime bond with her father, who was developing his psychoanalytic theory about the basis of emotional problems.

Anna’s only formal education was at Vienna’s elite Cottage Lyceum, where she complained about being bored. After graduation in 1912, she visited her grandmother in Italy and became acquainted with Maria Montessori’s method. She taught elementary school children at the Lyceum until she developed tuberculosis in 1917. Her first experience with children from troubled homes came in 1920, when she volunteered at Vienna’s Baumgarten Home for Jewish orphans.

An involvement with psychoanalysis began at age 14, when she read some of her father’s books. He psychoanalyzed her from 1918 to 1922. After they attended the International Psychoanalytic Congress together in 1920, she became one of the first female members of that association. From 1927 to 1934, she was its general secretary. In 1923, when Sigmund Freud had the first operation for a malignant tumor on his jaw, she abandoned her plan to open a psychotherapy practice and devoted herself to translating and writing down his ideas. She also observed wartime effects on children and her “Introduction to the Technique of Child Analysis” was published in 1927.

Dorothy Burlingame, an American psychoanalyst who had moved to Vienna with her children, formed a lifelong relationship with her. In 1927, they organized a school utilizing the “project method” that was closed after the 1938 Nazi takeover of Austria. The Freud and Burlingame families moved to England, where Sigmund Freud died from his cancer in 1939. Anna and Dorothy became involved with programs for children who were without parents and published books and articles about children under stress. They established the Hampstead War Nursery, which soon became a training center. In 1947, this became the Anna Freud Centre, now recognized as a leading institution for studying psychotherapy.

Following World War II, Anna Freud traveled frequently to the United States and other countries. Her Yale Law School seminar series on crime and the family was published as “Beyond the Best Interests of the Child” in 1973. She received several honorary doctorates, the first at Clark University (1950) and the last at Harvard (1980).

By the 1950s, the therapeutic importance of young children’s activities was incorporated into the developing preschool and **kindergarten** programs of the United States and other nations. At the painting easel, in the “housekeeping corner” or with building blocks, children could express their inner feelings. Teachers observed, interpreted, and sometimes facilitated their projects, but allowed freedom within defined boundaries. Wartime programs had demonstrated the advantages of having one nurturant adult with each small group of children, providing a theoretical basis for current staffing regulations. Parent education began to incorporate psychoanalytic principles, from the importance of breast-feeding to sex education. Even the role of fathers began to change to one of more nurturance and less corporal punishment. Many cities established child guidance

clinics to help families resolve interpersonal relationships and developmental concerns. Psychoanalytic theory continues to be a controversial issue among psychologists, but the heritage of Anna Freud and her followers is such an integral part of early childhood education that its origins are rarely recognized. *See also* Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Web Sites: Anna Freud Centre, www.annafreudcentre.org; Freud Museum, www.freud.org.uk/fmanna.htm.

Dorothy W. Hewes

Freud, Sigmund (1856–1939)

Arguably one of the most influential thinkers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Freud was an Austrian doctor and psychoanalyst who created a dynamic theory to explain biological and cultural influences on mental development and behavior. His work with patients suffering mental illness led him to consider the human roots of both normal and abnormal development, including the contributions of **families, culture, gender, and sexual abuse** to personality. According to Freudian theory, inborn biological drives (Freud's concept of the *id*, including hunger, social contact, sexuality) encounter society's limits to those drives.

Many of Freud's ideas have contemporary currency. For example, he believed that humans develop a *superego*, or conscience, to provide an internal representation of society's rules; Freud's is a seminal psychological view of moral development. The interplay of *id* and societal forces shapes our *ego*, or who we are as a person; Freud's interpretation of this process is an early version of self-concept. His dynamic view of personality argues that much of development is subconscious or unconscious. Childhood is the crucible where these dynamic forces emerge. A psychosocial theory from Freud's view points to early **attachment and play** as important for self-concept, and Freud's psychosexual theory provides connections between early development and both gender and sexual identity. While the main thrust of his work was directed to psychiatry and clinical psychology, the importance of childhood within Freud's school of thought created many opportunities for connections with early education.

In 1909 Freud gave a series of lectures at Clark University at the invitation of G. Stanley Hall, leader of the **Child Study Movement**. These lectures provided international legitimacy for Freud's ideas and introduced them to early leaders in child development and early education. His thinking can be seen directly in developmentally oriented early childhood programs that were emerging at that time, such as the **Bank Street** child-centered school (see also **Developmental-Interaction Approach**) and other programs that acknowledged the whole child, play-based pedagogy, and creativity as bases for early education. With connections

established to child study, Freud's thinking has had continuous, if controversial, visibility within the developmental community that provides one knowledge base for early education.

Perhaps more important than Freud's direct influence on early childhood programs is the influence of his many followers. Scholars such as Erik Erikson, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, Lili Peller, and Donald Winnicott have provided psychodynamic perspectives on children's development that have expanded conceptions of play as an avenue for expression and growth. Freud inspired others to think of play as an indicator of how each child constructs a unique life history, resolves problems, expresses feeling or affect, and helps us understand who we are as persons.

It is easy to forget how elements of Freud's thinking have become pervasive in contemporary culture (e.g., Freudian slips, ego trips, unconscious acts). His thinking also continues to guide academic studies in a variety of areas, such as attachment theory (see John Bowlby), feminist studies of object relations, postmodern studies on gender, life-span development, law, history, biography, motivation, and other fields of inquiry. Many consider Freud's ideas to be metaphysical and untestable, while others see in his work a way of understanding the complexities of children's early growth and learning. *See also* Psychosocial Theory; Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education; Mental Health; Pedagogy, Activity-Based/Experiential; Pedagogy, Play-Based; Self-Esteem and Self-Concept.

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Stuart Reifel

Friends. *See* Peers and Friends

Froebel, Friedrich (1782–1852)

Although recognized primarily as the “Father” of the **kindergarten**, Friedrich Froebel also helped change educational methods for all age levels around the world. In the early 1800s, it was assumed that school should begin at age 7, with male teachers who enforced rote memorization by strict discipline. By the end of the nineteenth century, women were accepted as classroom teachers, discipline was less punitive, and his ideas about active learning had been incorporated into kindergartens and upper grades.

Many of Froebel's innovations can be attributed to his own difficult childhood, described in detail by Bowen (1909), Downs (1978), and others. He was born in the Thuringian village of Oberweisbach, now in eastern Germany. His mother died when he was an infant, a stepmother rejected him, and his father was an overworked Lutheran minister. Because he was a “dreamer” with learning problems, Friedrich was placed in the local school for girls until age 10. After

that, he lived with an uncle and attended classes with boys. At fifteen, he was a forester's apprentice for two years, where he developed an interest in nature and read scientific books.

Froebel briefly attended several universities to study philosophy and sciences. It was a period of radical ideas and social reform. At Jena, from newly translated Persian scriptures and crystallography, he redefined God to mean a spiritual element that holds everything in the universe together. In 1805, after being persuaded to teach at a Pestalozzian school in Frankfurt, he found his lifetime occupation. He said that it was like being a fish put back into water and he became determined to open his own school. He established his coeducational Universal German Educational Institution in 1816, following two years with Johann **Pestalozzi**. Its unique emphasis was upon "learning by doing" in cooperative groups, including gardening and handicrafts. Its philosophical goal was to integrate the inner spirit of students with the outer world.

When Froebel recognized that his students lacked preparation for a system of learning through doing when they entered at age 7, he began extensive correspondence and observations. Reading the long-forgotten writings of John Amos **Comenius** supported his concept of infant education with the assistance of their mothers and classrooms for those aged 3–7. When he was fifty-eight years old, despite the recent death of his wife and persistent financial problems, a kindergarten with a teacher training class and a mothers organization formally opened in Rudelstadt in 1840. It introduced the idea of "making the inner outer and the outer inner" by playful games and activities. The concept quickly spread, with his followers establishing similar schools in other locations. By 1848, 260 kindergarten supporters met at Rudelstadt to celebrate its success. However, Prussian officials became increasingly suspicious of his political affiliations. He was accused of being a pantheist and a socialist. They ordered all kindergartens closed in 1851, although most of those outside their state remained open. Support of other educators, originally negative because he supported female teachers and because he had difficulty in explaining his philosophy, had become positive. This was indicated by the standing ovation given when he entered a major European Educational Congress the following spring, but Froebel died "of a broken heart" two months later.

Although Froebel was a charismatic and persuasive speaker, he always found it difficult to express his thoughts in writing. He depended upon his wife, friends, and even former students to clarify his thoughts, but he traveled widely and maintained a prodigious output of letters, journals, and some major publications. His *Education of Man* (1826) was widely discussed throughout Europe, with its 1885 annotated translation by William **Hailmann** a major contributor to the movement in the United States that became known as **Progressive Education**. The activities of his 1844 picture book with an English title of *Mother-, Play- and Nursery Songs* are still chanted by mothers and integrated into preschool classes around the world.

At the time of his death, Froebel was still developing sequenced curriculum materials. Best known are the Gifts and Occupations, blocks and manipulative materials that were to be introduced in a logical progression from simple to complex as children became ready for them. Music was integrated into active games.

Children had garden plots and sand boxes. In these original kindergartens, individuality and creativity were encouraged by teachers who were facilitators, not disciplinarians. Mother volunteers were welcome, with teachers often addressed as “Auntie” to indicate their sisterhood.

Froebel’s kindergartens, with their teacher training classes, continued after his death. He had married Luise Levin in 1851, a former pupil who successfully moved the training program to Keilhau. The Baroness Bertha von Marenholz-Bulow, a financial supporter since 1849, carried the message to England, France, and other nations until her own death in 1893. Some of his followers, particularly those who had participated in his training classes and had left Germany because of the political situation, maintained his philosophy and passed it on to their own students in the United States. They recognized that he had intended to continue modifying and improving upon his original ideas. However, there soon were varied interpretations of his methods. Manufacturers sold manuals describing rigid use of products that they attributed to Froebel. Some educators who professed to follow him had only a superficial understanding and interjected their own beliefs (Hewes, 2001, 2005).

In the United States, when the kindergartens became integrated into the public schools during the early 1900s, children under age 4 or 5 were no longer admitted. Patty Smith Hill and other Froebelians became concerned about younger children. Their 1926 Committee on Nursery Schools evolved into the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), which maintains the basic kindergarten philosophy (see www.naeyc.org).

Interest in Froebel has recently revived. Brosterman (1997) described how modern art and architecture of the early 1900s derived from the Froebelian schooling of their creators. Rubin (2002) explained the relationship between Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture and Froebel’s crystallography. Authentic Froebelian materials and reprints of early books are available from the Froebel Foundation (www.froebelfoundation.org). Archives and other references are in several European universities. In England, the Froebel College in Roehampton is also the location of an International Froebel Society organized in 2002 with plans for biennial conferences (www.froebelweb.org). American kindergarten archives include those of the **Association for Childhood Education International** (see www.acei.org) at the University of Maryland in College Park.

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Dorothy W. Hewes

FST. See Family Systems Theory

G

Gay or Lesbian Parents, Children with

A growing number of children are being brought up by one or more gay or lesbian parents in one of a variety of family constellations. Accurate statistics regarding the number of children who have one or two parents who are gay or lesbian are impossible to obtain. The secrecy required as a result of the stigma still associated with homosexuality has hampered even basic epidemiological research. The best guess is that there are at least one million children in the United States who have at least one parent who is gay or lesbian. Many of these children are participating in early care and educational programs; in some cases, teachers are unaware of the children's family circumstances.

Most children now living with parents who are lesbian or gay were conceived in the context of a heterosexual relationship. Increasing social acceptance of diversity in sexual orientation has encouraged more gay men and lesbian women to "come out" prior to forming intimate relationships or becoming parents. The majority of lesbian women who conceive a child do so using alternative insemination techniques with sperm donated by an anonymous donor who has agreed to be identifiable when the child becomes an adult, or a fully-known donor (e.g., a friend or relative). Lesbian women and gay men can become parents as well by fostering or adopting children. Growing numbers of gay men have chosen to become fathers through the assistance of a surrogate mother who bears their child. Others have made agreements to share parenting responsibilities with a single woman or a lesbian couple.

Most research regarding children with gay or lesbian parents has focused on parental attitudes and behaviors; and children's psychosexual development (and sexual orientation), social and interpersonal experience, and psychological/emotional status.

Research on Parental Attitudes, Personality, and Adjustment

Research suggests that the parenting styles and attitudes of gay and heterosexual fathers are more similar than they are different. Fathers in each group endorse a

similar active, caretaking stance regarding their paternal role. Several studies have described fathers' encouragement of gender-appropriate toys, their attempts to provide a female role model for their children, and their children's generally accepting reactions to knowledge of their father's homosexuality. Gay fathers have been described repeatedly as nurturing and as having positive relationships with their children.

Lesbian and heterosexual mothers also describe themselves similarly in terms of maternal interests, current lifestyles, child-rearing practices, role conflicts, social support networks, and coping strategies. Few differences have been found over two decades of research comparing lesbian and heterosexual mothers' self-esteem, psychological adjustment, and attitudes toward child rearing. Lesbian mothers fall within the range of normal psychological functioning based on interviews and psychological assessments and report scores on standardized measures of self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and parenting stress indistinguishable from those reported by heterosexual mothers. Based on such assessments, lesbian mothers are at no greater risk for psychiatric disturbance than are heterosexual mothers.

Lesbian mothers typically endorse child-centered attitudes and commitment to their maternal roles. Lesbian mothers report making more efforts than do divorced heterosexual mothers to provide male role models for their children, and encourage their children to see their fathers more frequently after divorce than do heterosexual mothers. Lesbian mothers have also been reported to have greater knowledge of child development and more successful parenting skills, as a group, than heterosexual mothers. Lesbian partners appear to share child-care tasks more equitably than do typical heterosexual couples, and both partners are more equally involved with discipline and with their children's day-to-day activities.

Research on Children's Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Both environmental and genetic mechanisms might result in an increased likelihood for children who have a lesbian or gay parent to develop a homosexual orientation. Much attention has been paid to the play, playmate, and activity preferences of preadolescent children. These studies have failed to identify any differences in children's gender identification, playmates, toys, and activities based on the sexual orientation of their parents.

Only a few studies include *adults* whose parents were gay or lesbian, and the data are ambiguous. In one study of adult daughters of divorced mothers, no differences were found in gender identity, social roles, or sexual orientation based on the sexual orientation of the mother. In the most extensive study of the adult sexual orientation of the sons of gay fathers, 9 percent were bisexual or homosexual. A longitudinal follow up of adult men and women who had been raised as children in families with a lesbian mother as well as men and women who had been raised by a single heterosexual mother, found that although the former were more likely to consider the possibility of having a same-sex partner and to have been involved in at least a brief relationship with someone of the same gender, similar proportions of both groups reported feelings of attraction

toward someone of the same gender or identified themselves as gay or lesbian (Tasker and Golombok, 1997).

Children's Emotional and Social Development

Children's experience in households with gay and lesbian parents varies widely, based on the origin of the parenting relationship, whether they have experienced divorce, and the subsequent partnership experience of both parents. Some children are being raised by a single parent, some by two separated parents, others by a couple, and still others by three or four adults in a newly-imagined coparent arrangement (e.g., a lesbian couple and one or two sperm donors). This diversity in family arrangements is helping to elucidate the requirements of successful parenting, but makes systematic research difficult.

Nine studies published between 1981 and 1994 compared 260 children from the ages of 3 to 11 who were living with a lesbian or gay parent after divorce, and compared them to children who lived with a heterosexual parent after divorce. These studies included reports from parents, teachers, and children themselves. They concurred in finding no meaningful differences between the groups in academic achievement, self-esteem, peer relationships, social adjustment, emotional problems, or psychiatric symptoms. Neither the subsequent partnership status of the divorced mothers nor the quality of the relationship between these mothers and their former spouses was included in the research.

One longitudinal study assessed twenty-five young adults (seventeen to twenty-five years old) who were raised by a divorced lesbian mother with twenty-one young adults who had been raised by a divorced heterosexual mother, and similarly found few differences among them in psychological or social adjustment or in family relationships (Tasker and Golombok, 1997). The young adults with a lesbian mother were no more likely to report anxiety or depression than their peers whose mothers were heterosexual, and scores on standardized inventories of psychological functioning in both groups were well within the normal range. Extensive interviews revealed that their memories of having been teased during childhood were little different from those experienced by children raised by single heterosexual mothers, and intrafamily relationships were rated as equally good.

Seven studies published from 1987 to 2003 included 208 children between the ages of 2 and 11 with lesbian mothers and 218 children with heterosexual parents. Once again, no differences were found based on the sexual orientation of the mothers in children's cognitive functioning, self esteem, behavior, peer relationships, social adjustment, emotional symptoms, psychiatric diagnoses, or relationships with grandparents (Golombok, Tasker, and Murray, 1997; Tasker, 1999; Vanfraussen et al., 2003). Some studies report that children of heterosexual parents saw themselves as being somewhat more aggressive than did children of lesbians; and parents and teachers reported them to be more bossy, negative, and domineering. Children of lesbian parents more often saw themselves as lovable and were reported by both parents and teachers to be more affectionate, responsive, and protective of younger children (Steckel, 1987; Patterson 1994; 1996; 1997).

Since all parents studied were women, the possible effects of gender cannot be separated from those of sexual orientation. Children whose parents reported greater relationship satisfaction, more egalitarian division of household and paid labor, and more regular contacts with grandparents and other relatives, were rated to be better adjusted and to have fewer behavioral problems by both parents and teachers (Chan, Raboy, and Patterson, 1998; Patterson et al., 1995, 1998).

Most of these studies report on volunteers, generally parents who are Caucasian, relatively well educated and middle class, and live in urban areas. Because the findings in many separate reports are very similar they have been presumed to reflect a more generalizable pattern. Two recent studies used community-based random samples of parents to investigate the well-being of children whose mothers were lesbian, thus strengthening the findings of smaller investigations. The importance of these two studies is that the research was planned and carried out without the intent to investigate same-sex parents. In both cases the investigations regarding same-sex (in both case lesbian) parents and their children were post-hoc analyses and thus neither the sample nor the methods were influenced by any possible bias.

Among a national sample of 12,000 adolescents in the United States, the forty-four who reported living with two women in a “marriage-like” family arrangement were found to be similar to peers whose parents were heterosexual in measures of self esteem, depression, anxiety, school functioning, school “connectedness,” and the presence of school difficulties. Overall, these adolescents reported positive family relationships, including parental warmth, care from others, personal autonomy, and neighborhood integration, and there were no systematic differences between the same-sex and the opposite-sex parent families. There was no difference between the two groups in the proportion of adolescents who reported having had sexual intercourse, nor in the number who reported having a “romantic relationship” within the past eighteen months (Wainright, Russell, and Patterson, 2004).

Another study reported data from a cohort study that enrolled all children born within a particular county in England during one year (14,000), comparing the well-being of the 39 7-year-old children whose parents self-identified as lesbian to the well-being of peers whose parents were heterosexual. No differences were found in maternal warmth, emotional involvement, enjoyment of motherhood, frequency of conflicts, supervision of the child, abnormal behaviors of the child reported by parents or teachers, children’s self esteem, or psychiatric disorders. On the other hand there were significant differences in warmth, parenting quality and enjoyment, emotional involvement, imaginative play activities, severity of conflicts, supervision of the child, maternal stress, and abnormal child behaviors reported by teachers—all favoring two-parent families (lesbian *or* heterosexual) over single parent families (Golombok et al., 2003).

Summary

Lesbian and gay parents appear to have parenting styles and quality of relationships with their children similar to those of heterosexual parents. A large and growing professional literature demonstrates that parental sexual orientation has

no measurable effect on children's mental health or social adjustment. Children whose parents are lesbian have been reported to be affectionate, nurturing toward younger children, and accepting of diversity.

These changing family constellations suggest numerous implications for early childhood educators. It is important to emphasize that considerable diversity exists among the population of children whose parents are not heterosexual. The life of a child who lives alone with her divorced gay father is surely different from that of a child born to a well-functioning lesbian couple, and different as well from one who lives with his divorced lesbian mother and lesbian stepmother. The roles of the sperm donor or surrogate mother, and the child's gender, are likely also to affect family relationships and life experience. Teachers should ensure that the diversity in family constellations present in their classrooms and schools is discussed and valued. School libraries should include books for children of all ages about families with gay or lesbian parents.

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Ellen C. Perrin

Gender and Gender Stereotyping

Background

Gender issues in U.S. early childhood education began to be addressed in the early 1970s largely in concert with the rise of the third phase of the Women's Movement. At that time, the focus was on freeing girls from gender stereotyping perceived as limiting their physical, cognitive, and social/emotional development.

Early research carefully differentiated gender identity—that is, the self-awareness and acceptance of being male or female—from gender roles—that

is, the acceptance and adoption of socially defined behaviors and attitudes associated with being male or female. We now know that gender identity develops very early. By age 2 children know if they are a girl or a boy. Gender roles also begin to develop very early. Most children enter preschool with well-defined knowledge of whether they are a girl or a boy, and also which toys and play activities are considered suitable for their sex.

Studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s pointed to the ways that nature and nurture intersect to create very different socialization experiences for girls and boys. Some studies documented the different reactions and behaviors of parents based on the sex of their child. In one study (Fagot, 1978), parents were shown an infant dressed first in girl's clothing and then in boy's clothing and their initial reactions were recorded. The "girl" baby was described as tiny, delicate, precious. The "boy" baby was a bruiser, big, a future football player. In fact, there was only one infant involved in this study, alternately dressed in different clothing. Another study (Bridges, 1993) analyzed baby congratulation cards to document the role that societal expectations play in gender stereotyping from the moment of birth (or before). Greeting cards to welcome the birth of a child conveyed their messages through color-coding—pink for girls, blue for boys; boy cards showed boys (usually older than an infant) engaged with balls, sports equipment, vehicles and other objects suggesting action. Illustrations on girl cards typically showed girls immobile in cribs or baskets surrounded by rattles, flowers, and mobiles. The written messages were as stereotyped as the illustrations. Boys could be anything, girls were forever small, precious, little girls, and inactive. Unfortunately, the same study could have been conducted in the twenty-first century with very similar results.

Researchers in the 1970s also examined the effects of gender differentiated teacher interactions with girls and boys, and the role that toy preferences play in the development of cognitive, physical, and social/emotional skills. Some wrote about the importance of appropriate teacher intervention to ensure that girls and boys engage with variety of toys and activities to help them develop a broad range of skills. Others demonstrated the teacher's crucial role in helping girls move beyond typical play patterns to enter spaces such as the block area that had been almost exclusively the realm of boys. Also in the 1970s, the Non-Sexist Child Development Project was turning research into practice by providing staff development, parent workshops, and curriculum to help the adults who work with children and to free children, both girls and boys, from the limits imposed by rigid sex-role expectations (Sprung, 1975).

The purpose of the large body of early gender identity and gender-role literature was to first document the ramifications of stereotyped play in terms of children's development, and then help teachers and parents understand how the perpetuation of rigid roles limited the potential development of both girls and boys. In a review of the research on the gender divided learning attributes (Greenberg, 1985), honed in the home and preschool, that girls and boys bring with them as they enter kindergarten, there were several findings of significance. For girls these include verbal, small motor acuity, nurturance, social ability, and impulse control; for boys the attributes include spatial ability, large motor skills, inventiveness, self-worth. These attributes follow closely the sex differences described by Eleanor

Maccoby and Carol Jacklin in their 1974 landmark book *The Psychology of Sex Differences*.

Awareness Made a Difference

The research studies, the work with teachers and parents, research reports in professional journals, articles in the popular press, and the passage in 1972 of Title IX (the federal legislation barring sex discrimination in programs receiving Federal funding) all converged to bring about changes in early childhood education regarding gender roles and gender stereotyping. For the most part, attention focused on freeing girls from the limits of sex-role stereotyping. Parents were encouraged to dress girls in pants that allowed them to run and climb freely and to get dirty with abandon instead of worrying about messing their dresses or scraping their knees. Teachers made a concerted effort to enlarge the scope of girl's activities, encouraging block building and other large motor games that built physical strength. Researchers helped teachers understand the ways in which their unconscious interactions with girls and boys helped to perpetuate sex-roles. Classroom videotapes and observations documented that teachers called on boys more often than girls, praised boys' strengths and accomplishments, and complimented girls on their appearance and clothes.

Other factors highlighted the damaging effects of sex-role stereotyping on girls. Books and articles urged parents to encourage their daughters to break out of sex-typed play. Sexist language became an issue, and guidelines for gender neutral terms were issued by most educational publishers, for example, fireman became firefighter, repair man became repair person, the generic *he* was avoided by using the plural *they* or, if necessary, he and she. Pressure from activists groups of parents and educators convinced toy manufacturers to reduce stereotyping in their packaging. As a result, toy boxes began to show both boys and girls, and girls were no longer relegated to the background watching the boy use the toy.

In the movement to free girls from sex-role stereotyping, some early childhood educators and parents also looked at how rigid roles limited boys' potential. Efforts were made to help boys develop and express a full range of emotions and their nurturing side. The Non-Sexist Child Development Project, a national effort to reduce sex-role stereotyping beginning in early childhood, worked with teachers and parents to free *both* boys and girls from the limitations imposed by rigid role divisions. "Free to Be You and Me," books, records, and videotapes gave teachers and parents enjoyable tools to work with. Publishers of children's trade books came out with many books that showed boys and girls and men and women in a variety of nonstereotyped roles. The more open view of what children could be was apparent at the annual conferences of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The exhibit hall displayed early childhood materials and toys that were nonsexist, multicultural, and even began to be inclusive of children with disabilities.

Backsliding

As in all movements, a period of real progress is followed by a plateau or backsliding, and this happened in the efforts to free children from gender-stereotyped

roles. Starting in the mid-1980s and into the 1990s war toys and cartoon-type action figures geared to boys became resurgent and even LEGO became color-coded, with pink and lavender sets for girls and primary color sets for boys. Violence in society and depicted in television shows, in cartoons, and in movies seemed ubiquitous. Critics put forth that boys were being feminized and more conservative attitudes began to emerge. Of course, not all gains were lost, and girls continued to close the gap in areas where they had not been expected to achieve, for example, sports, mathematics and science. For boys, however, the backsliding led to gender problems that urgently needed to be addressed.

Emerging Gender Issues

Beginning in the late 1990s books such as *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Masculinity* (Pollack, 1998); *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (Kindlon and Thompson, 1999); and *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity* (Ferguson, 2000) began to appear that illuminated concerns about boy's social/emotional development and school performance. The research showed that on both levels boys were not faring well. Boys lag behind girls in reading and writing; are more likely to be referred to a school psychologist; are more likely to be diagnosed with **Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**; represent 70 percent of students with learning disabilities and 80 percent of those with social/emotional disturbances; represent 70 percent of school suspensions, particularly minority males in urban schools; and commit 85 percent of the school violence and comprise the majority of victims of that violence.

Research shows that boys are especially vulnerable during their first ten years with respect to social/emotional development and academic achievement, particularly in the area of **literacy**. Many of the statistics cited above have been prevalent in schools for many years, but until recently little attention was paid. Teachers and parents alike seemed to assume that boys were okay.

The academic and social well-being of boys, however, is becoming a key gender issue. The literature has just begun to examine the difficulty schools face in adequately supporting the developmental needs of many boys. Since boys' problems emerge in the primary grades, it is imperative that early childhood educators become aware of the issues and develop strategies to address them. This does not mean that attention should turn away from girls; it means that educators must look at gender issues in the preschool years in terms of *all* children.

Addressing teasing and *bullying* behavior in the early childhood years became another emerging issue in the 1990s, with gender-related implications. Educational Equity Concepts and the Wellesley College Centers for Research on Women conducted a study in grades K-3 in New York City and Framingham, Massachusetts, to determine the extent and the nature of this behavior. Methods included classroom observations throughout the school day, one-on-one interviews with children, and focus groups with teachers and parents. Findings, which agreed with those of other researchers, showed that boys initiated incidents three times as often as girls, that girls and boys were equal recipients, and that adults did not intervene in over 70 percent of observed incidents. Children were well aware of

the fact that teachers usually did nothing to stop the teasing. In interviews they remarked, “Boys usually chase girls because that’s what boys do—boys chase” “Teachers don’t do anything.” “Kids won’t stop until the teacher makes them.” The gender message in children’s reactions is subtle. If adults don’t intervene, boys learn that it’s okay to behave in ways that upset others, and girls learn that they have to put up with this behavior and usually won’t be helped by adults.

Based on a growing body of research on the harmful effects of teasing and bullying, and the fact that it is a pervasive problem in schools nationally and internationally, many programs have been developed to address the need for school wide intervention. At the early childhood level, the Quit it! Model, Don’t Laugh at Me, the Bullying Prevention Model, and the Second Step Model all take a school-wide approach that involves all the adults who work with children (see Web sites).

Conclusion

Understanding the role of gender in early childhood education has come a long way—and there is an even longer road ahead. The learning gap for girls has significantly narrowed and their options and opportunities, despite some backsliding, have been greatly enhanced. Gender issues regarding the development of young boys need to be addressed much more directly than in the past, and attention must be paid in preschool.

The early childhood classroom is the place where all the building blocks for later learning are put in place, which presents a challenge and opportunity for curriculum and a learning environment that addresses the individual needs of boys and girls and is free from teasing and bullying behavior.

To meet the challenge, more attention needs to be paid to gender issues in teacher education, both at the preservice and inservice level. Research on gender issues in child development needs to be continuous, and teachers need be exposed to research findings and practical applications. At the present time, there is a push to make early childhood education more academic as a way to make children more “ready” for primary school. If their early childhood teachers create a learning community that meets the physical, cognitive, and social/emotional needs of each child and frees him or her from the limits of gender stereotyping, children will truly be “ready” for the challenges ahead.

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Web Sites: Bullying Prevention Program: www.wcwoonline.org/bullying; Operation Respect: Don't Laugh at Me, info@operationrespect.org; Quit it! School-Wide Model, www.edequity.org; Second Step: Cfc.org/program.

Barbara Sprung

Gesell, Arnold (1880–1961)

Arnold Gesell was a pioneer in the child study movement, best known for his belief in the genetic blueprint that he called “maturation.” Gesell was born in 1880 in Alma, Wisconsin, and studied psychology at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he received his doctorate in 1906. While attending college, Gesell was influenced by the work of one of his professors, G. Stanley Hall, who was one of the first psychologists to study child development. After graduation, Gesell was invited to teach at the State Normal School in Los Angeles, California. There he met and married a child psychology professor, Beatrice Chandler. In the summer of 1909, Gesell and his wife spent time at the Pennsylvania Training School for Feeble Minded Children. While working with these “backward” children, he became aware of a need to better understand normal development. In 1911, Gesell went to Yale as head of the Yale Clinic of Child Development. It was during this period of his life that he became convinced that medical training was critical to his study of young children. Gesell completed a medical degree at Yale in 1915.

Gesell began his work by studying retarded development in children, but soon concluded that it was first necessary to understand normal development. Gesell used novel methods for studying young children, including recording children on movie film while using controlled environments and specific stimuli. Using the technique of filming through a one-way mirror, Gesell amassed data on over 12,000 children. From this information, he concluded that children go through specific and ordered stages in their development. His research eventually led to the creation of a set of behavioral norms for infant development. Gesell charted behavior in the areas of motor development, language, adaptive behavior, and personal habits.

Gesell believed that development of the child begins at conception, and that development is under the control of basic biological systems, or a genetic blueprint that Gesell called “maturation.” The rate of this development may vary but the development itself unfolds in a set sequence. Environment and socialization have some effect over development, but it is the maturational process that takes primacy. Gesell felt that each child was unique and that teaching should be child centered to reflect these differences. He also believed that there were optimal times when a specific learning was most effective: when the child was “ready to learn.” Teaching should take place within this optimal period that is directed by the child’s maturational schedule. A failure on the part of the teacher or caregiver to correctly interpret the “readiness” of the child could lead to wasted effort on the part of the teacher, and also lead to unjustified punishment.

Gesell’s concept of **readiness** for learning has come under attack on many occasions. Some theorists feel that the environment and the activities that a child

is exposed to can lead development into new areas and it is this interaction that spurs on the development. Gesell would argue that it is a waste of time to pursue new challenges in development before the child is ready, that new learning could not proceed without the maturity necessary to further that development. Frustration in learning is caused by children being exposed to new ideas before they are ready. Instead, children should be given “the gift of time” and allowed to wait until they are mature enough to be ready to learn. Many public school systems are presently basing their entry to school on Gesell’s behavior norms and maturational theory.

Gesell’s most noted work centered upon establishing “norms” for typical development in children. These norms were used to educate parents and caregivers of young children and help them become more aware of typical behaviors in children. His work also guided the development of supportive programs for young children. Gesell died in 1961, after publishing over 400 items, including books, articles, monographs, and films.

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Martha Latorre

Gifted and Talented Children

Recognizing the gifted and talented children in the United States has long been an ill-defined process. Lewis Terman (1916) was one of the first researchers to identify children of superior intellectual ability. According to Terman’s study, students were recognized as gifted if they exhibited functioning at or above an **Intelligence Quotient (IQ)** of 140 and they were superior to others in physique, health, science, morality, and adjustment factors (Reid and McGuire, 1995). Whereas Terman’s definition is extremely focused, others interpret giftedness more broadly as a “general ability . . . a multidimensional construct that includes both potential and performance” (Harrison, 2004, p. 78). Nonetheless, Terman’s definition of a gifted and talented student has remained the widely accepted picture of a superior child. Because of the definition’s emphasis on the physical characteristics of a person, individuals with disabilities, including emotional and behavioral, have often been overlooked for possessing gifted traits (Reid and McGuire, 1995).

In the United States, twenty-five states have legislation that defines who is gifted and talented, twenty-one states have mandated that the state board of education define the gifted and talented education, and in four states, no legislative body has defined the population. The lack of clarity surrounding the definition of giftedness, combined with a nonuniversal view of this subject, has resulted in the lack of comprehensive data pertaining to this group of students. Educational responses to the complex social, emotional, and academic needs of gifted children

are as uncertain and controversial as the definition. Many parents and teachers complain that basic prescribed curriculum and instruction is not challenging for gifted learners.

Programs for children who are identified as gifted range from achievement classes, enrichment and acceleration programs, grade skipping, or “services beyond the basic programs provided by schools” (Bathon, 2004). Acceleration refers to “raising the level and/or pace of instruction to be commensurate with students’ achievement levels and capacity or rate of learning” and “[e]nrichment . . . refers to qualitatively different sorts of programs and effects on achievement” (Feldhusen, 1991, p. 133). Acceleration programs can be traced to the early twentieth-century American system of the tracking hierarchy, which separated children who exhibited a much greater capacity for learning and creative expression from others in a typical classroom. This practice often involved removing gifted and talented children from the classroom at a prescribed time during the week and allowing them to use different resources from the rest of their typical classroom peers (Oakes and Lipton, 1994). Starting in the 1990s, this tracking practice came under scrutiny, particularly in public schools, due to the uneven distribution of resources and opportunities. School choice and private schools were seen as viable options for children who fell into the state’s definition of gifted and talented (Oakes and Lipton, 1994). Enrichment programs also redirect potentially limited resources to only a small population of children.

There is little long-term research on the benefits of acceleration versus enrichment programs, primarily due to a lack of federal, state, or foundation funding. The little data available suggested that acceleration programs offered more in terms of skills for independent study, research, and creative thinking (Feldhusen, 1991). Tracking this data and making academic recommendations for the gifted and talented remains a challenge and source of debate in the educational system.

Among the concerns about the effects of gifted programs is the generally narrow focus on intellectual growth at the expense of the social, emotional, and behavioral elements of development. Some scholars (Feldman, 1986) suggest that such a singular focus can contribute to anxiety and social isolation due to lack of adequate personal and social coping skills. Others (Lubinski et al., 2001) suggest that these emotional, behavioral, and in some instances, social difficulties, interfere with the gifted children’s capacity to use the full potential of their skills, particularly when they are put into accelerated courses or opt to skip a grade level. Some suggest that the indifference to the emotional/behavioral disability that some children identified as gifted and talented experience is related to the mindset that the gifted and talented “appear to be doing fine” (Plucker and Levy, 2001, p. 75). Research suggests the contrary, however; with gifted children approximately twice as likely as nongifted students to exhibit social and emotional difficulties (Winner, 2000). The gifted child’s level of socioeconomic status and ethnicity also play a role; the social pressures on many gifted African American students, including economic pressures, may lead to the adoption of negative behaviors that camouflage their giftedness (Dillard and Brazil, 2002). This research indicates a strong need for programs designed for the gifted and talented that support the emotional and social needs of the children as well as maximize their academic potential.

Mara Sapon-Shevin (2003) offers another critical appraisal of gifted education programs in the United States, arguing that, by focusing on this elite population, schools and communities are less inclined to work to improve the overall general education programs. Sapon-Shevin suggests, as an alternative, that the educational system work to improve classroom settings, teaching, and curriculum for all children, not just a select few. She argues, further, against the idea that the gifted population is homogenous; and that educating this population should focus on promoting challenges for each student, as it should be with all academic talents. Sapon-Shevin couches her critic of gifted education within a larger context of advocacy for political and economic justice such that improved educational opportunities are created for the full range of students, from the poor to the gifted.

Critics of Sapon-Shevin challenge the political and socioeconomic arguments against gifted education, and emphasize the need to focus on the educational aspect of the gifted and talented programs and services (Gallagher, 1996). Such advocates of gifted education are especially resistant to the idea that “[e]xcellence can only be considered once equity is reached (for all children)” (p. 245), both because this premise is highly unrealistic and unfair, given the implication that the gifted population would be excluded from quality programs because the rest of the educational system does not offer superior programs for all children (1996). As an alternative, Gallagher challenges the gifted education field to engage in a self-critical reflection that does not offer excuses for wanting to extend the boundaries for knowledge for superior, intellectual children (1996).

These differences in perspectives converge around the need for a rich debate over gifted education, bringing this population to the forefront of the education discussion in the United States. Few deny that the gifted and talented are an important population because of their potential contributions to society, and thus, need to be supported as such in their learning and development.

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Sarah A. Leveque

Good Start, Grow Smart

Good Start, Grow Smart is a new reform initiative to improve low-income **Head Start** children's academic readiness for school, as well as to improve accountability and quality in Head Start, and preschool education more generally. Under the George W. Bush administration, new reforms (most notably known as **No Child Left Behind** [NCLB]) have been directed at improving educational achievement at the elementary and secondary levels of schooling. Good Start, Grow Smart is aligned with the No Child Left Behind initiative but with a focus on low-income 3-4 year olds enrolled in Head Start. Announced by the Bush administration in 2002 (White House, 2002), Good Start, Grow Smart focuses on greater accountability, increased qualifications of teachers, and more frequent assessment of four-year-old children on academic readiness outcomes.

Head Start is the longest lasting social program remaining from the 1960s Kennedy-Johnson era program. After the implementation of NCLB, the Bush administration (White House, 2002) announced that it would begin a new reform at the preschool level, aimed at the federally funded Head Start program. *Good Start, Grow Smart* is aligned with the NCLB in that it focuses on greater accountability, increased qualifications of teachers, and more frequent assessment of four-year-old children on academic readiness outcomes.

The Purposes of Good Start, Grow Smart

President Bush announced the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative at the White House in 2002. He emphasized the following key aim of the reform:

- To continue Head Start's emphasis on the "whole child" by focusing on health, social, emotional, cognitive, language, and academic development (White House, 2002).

In addition, the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative addresses the following three major areas (White House, 2002, p. 1):

- Strengthening Head Start: Through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Administration will develop a new accountability system for Head Start to ensure that every Head Start center assesses standards of learning in early literacy, language, and numeracy skills.
- HHS will also implement a national training program with the goal of training the nearly 50,000 Head Start teachers in early literacy teaching techniques.
- Partnering with States to Improve Early Childhood Education: The Administration proposes a stronger Federal-State partnership in the delivery of quality early childhood programs, *Key Debates related to Good Start, Grow Smart Reforms from 2002-2006*.

Access and Funding

Good Start, Grow Smart envisioned adding funds to Head Start for teacher training, enhancing teacher salaries, and to pay for assessments and new accountability measures. But the amount of funding provided, given social cuts to the federal budget over the past four years, has resulted in a slight reduction in number of children funded, and the funding of programs more generally. In addition, while Good Start, Grow Smart focused on improving the credentials or “quality” of its teachers and programs by having 50 percent of its teachers with bachelors degrees in education or early education, 2006 legislative records suggest this aim may be reduced or eliminated as a mandate, as there is too little funding available federally to adequately increase teacher salaries as envisioned (National Head Start Association, 2006).

Assessment and Accountability

Since 2002, a new form of “managerialism” in welfare state discourses (Clarke and Newman, 1997) appears to be leading toward a renewed emphasis on a variety of managerial and accountability standards in Head Start, with one child development researcher even suggesting that Head Start could be likened to a factory where efficiency and accountability standards must be met. These shifts have resulted in multiple new developments as part of Good Start, Grow Smart reforms and suggested reforms. These include the following:

- Renewed emphasis on academic readiness, especially in early literacy and numeracy outcomes, with new summative or high stakes assessments of child outcomes.
- Renewed emphasis on accountability and management standards, with more professional management and program accountability assessments.
- Recompetition for Head Start contracts based on determination of “noncompliance.”
- New faith-based hiring initiatives.
- New emphases on paternal, as well as maternal involvement programs.
- New ways to collaborate or form partnerships with state-based preschool (prekindergarten) initiatives.

New Outcomes. Head Start, from its inception, was organized around comprehensive outcomes related to health and child development, child care, and educational programming. The Good Start, Grow Smart reform focuses more narrowly on pre-academic **readiness** skills in **literacy** and numeracy. These shifts follow the lead of No Child Left Behind, and the scientific reports that suggest young children are “eager to learn” (National Research Council, 2001), and that reading failures can be prevented by earlier attention to a rich literacy-oriented curriculum (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998). There is significant debate about a too narrow curriculum for Head Start, as well as an inappropriate interpretation of what an effective early literacy and numeracy curriculum should be for young children, although there is support in the Head Start and early childhood education community for additional emphases in curriculum related to appropriate early literacy and numeracy activities, and developmentally appropriate assessments (Zigler and Styfco, 2004).

Assessments. As suggested above, there is still great debate about how much emphasis should be placed on early literacy and numeracy, their definition, and how to teach these skills in a developmentally appropriate way to the nation's children (Delpit, 1995; National Research Council, 2001; Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998). The new national assessment of Head Start four year olds first implemented in the Fall of 2003 as part of the Good Start, Grow Smart reform is called the National Reporting System or NRS. It is oriented toward testing early academics, especially language comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, early letter and number recognition, phonetic awareness, word recognition, and early numeracy skills. Since its first national implementation, the NRS has been administered twice a year in English to all children, and in Spanish and then English to children whose primary language is Spanish. The test has been criticized as an inappropriate high stakes **assessment** of young children that is unreliable as well as lacking in validity, particularly for children whose first language is Spanish (GAO, 2005; Meisels and Atkins-Burnett, 2004). It has also been judged to be culturally biased (GAO, 2005; Meisels and Atkins-Burnett, 2004). The 2005 GAO report found that teachers reported that the Head Start curriculum was beginning to change to a more narrow range of academic skills, and that some were "teaching to the test." This refocusing of the **curriculum** toward more academic readiness outcomes was a primary goal of the 2002 Good Start, Grow Smart reform (White House, 2002). The GAO report (2005) recommended revising the NRS to increase reliability and validity for all children, and adding a socioemotional outcomes assessment. Despite continuing debate, in 2006, new revisions and an additional socioemotional assessment are being piloted for addition to the NRS.

Accountability and Management. The legislative proposals in Good Start, Grow Smart have shifted oversight from advisory and/or parent councils for making important policy decisions about their own children's programs (hiring/firing, curriculum orientation) to management councils that would implement accountability performance standards. These would include determination of *noncompliance*, fraud, and when grantees should be involved in recompetition of federal funds and grantee status. Head Start grantees throughout the United States have accepted the need for oversight and accountability standards throughout the history of Head Start, but are concerned about the loss of powers by parent-community councils, as well as the specter of being judged noncompliant. There is concern that the recompetition of federal Head Start grants might result in greater state or private control of Head Start funds, and potentially greater inequalities across the states compared to the current federally guided and managed program (Clarke and Newman, 1997).

Increased Encouragement of "Faith-based" Hiring and Curricular Practices. While Head Start has frequently had programs in religious-sponsored building sites over its history, Good Start, Grow Smart proposes an increase in federal funding for private faith-based contractors, with an allowance that these contractors can hire and fire employees based on religious background. Some suggest that the new proposed provisions use public funding to allow for discriminatory hiring

practices based on religion, and also would allow different Head Start community-based grantees to fire long-term employees, even those highly credentialed, in favor of assistant and full-time staff that conform to the religious beliefs of the sponsoring program.

New Emphases on Paternal as well as Maternal Involvement Programs. Definitions of marriage and family, as well as support for nuclear two parent families, have been an important part of recent welfare legislation since the 1990s, and have been stressed under the Bush administration reforms related to a variety of policy initiatives. There has been greater support for the traditions of marriage, family, and father-as well as mother-support programs. Good Start, Grow Smart reforms and proposed legislation encourage marriage over single parenthood, and also provide the framework for new fatherhood programs to educate fathers about their responsibilities and possibilities for involvement with their preschool-age children through Head Start programs. Although this has been implicit in Head Start since its inception, and fathers and other relatives have often been involved in their children's education and in Head Start programs, the Good Start, Grow Smart reforms provide new funding and policy recommendations aimed at father involvement, education, and support. Because these initiatives are also part of a broad new welfare policy aimed at enhancing maternal employment outside the household, increased emphasis on marriage, and maternal/father individual responsibility, the new reforms in Good Start, Grow Smart are one part of a larger debate related to changing discourses about family and marriage, personal responsibility, and employment (Bloch et al., 2003).

Increased Collaboration and Partnership with the States. Good Start, Grow Smart (White House, 2002) encouraged partnerships with states enabling more efficient use of Head Start funds in combination with funds for child-care and early childhood programs at the state level. Good Start, Grow Smart proposes more integrated partnerships that would use federal, state, and local funds and programming more effectively and efficiently to enhance the ability of states and localities to provide 4-K programs for children "at risk" as well as to provide more full-day child-care services for children of low-income single mothers who must find employment under the new welfare-to-work regimes. Despite the efforts of the Bush Administration to devolve federal Head Start funding to the states, two specific attempts to experiment with state block grants to selected experimental states have failed to be approved by Congress after resistance from Head Start lobbyists, parents, and key legislators. The current emphasis on integration and collaboration of Head Start funds with other state and local funds is aimed at making a better "system" of early education and child care, though no new funding is provided (Zigler and Styfco, 2004; National Head Start Association, 2006). *See also Families; Fathers.*

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Marianne Bloch and Ko Eun Kim

Gordon, Ira J. (1923-1978)

Ira Gordon is best known for his groundbreaking work in parent education and home visiting. He was a native of New York City and received his advanced education in the city of his birth: his bachelor's degree from City College of New York and his master's degree and doctorate from Teacher's College at Columbia University. He wrote twelve books and cowrote three others. He taught at Kansas State College, the University of Florida, and the University of Maryland. He ended his career at the University of North Carolina in 1978 after moving there in 1977 to become Kenan Professor and Dean of the School of Education.

Dr. Gordon was equally proficient in research, programmatic innovation, public speaking, and social action. He was a pioneer of action research and one of the first university-based psychologists to develop home visiting programs for the educational and social enrichment of infants and toddlers from poor families. His first such effort in that area was the Parent Education Program (PEP). Developed in 1966, PEP was the beginning step in a series of intervention research efforts that engaged paraprofessionals as home visitors to demonstrate home-learning activities to parents (usually the mother) so that they in turn would engage in broadly defined instructional interaction with their children. This series of interventions, which he based on sound developmental theory and research, continued through 1974 and included such variations on PEP as the Early Childhood Stimulation Through Parent Education Program (ECSPEP), the Home Learning Center Approach to Early Stimulation (HLC), Instructional Strategies in Infant Stimulation (ISIS), the Social Roots of Competency Project, and the Effect of Reinforcement on Infant Performance Project.

From its beginning in rural northern Florida, his parent intervention model spread throughout the country. His "Florida Model" influenced the design of the "Follow Through Program," the "Head Start-Planned Variations Program," the

“Parent Child Centers,” and the “Teacher Corp.” As a frequent consultant to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and private foundations, he helped to turn the nation’s attention to the needs of very young children.

Dr. Gordon was a firm believer in the importance of longitudinal research and with the support of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare organized a group of over fifty researchers involved in early intervention efforts. The group, nicknamed “Upstart” by Irving Lazar, met twice a year for five years in the 1970s. Its members were many of this country’s early intervention pioneers, including Kuno Beller, Bettye Caldwell, Sybille Escalona, Susan Gray, Jerome Kagan, Ronald Lally, Phyllis Levenstein, Howard Moss, Frank Palmer, Earl Schaefer, Jean Watts, David Weikart, and Leon Yarrow. Dr. Gordon worked tirelessly to keep the focus of “Upstart” discussions on the sharing of ideas, strategies, and research that could be used in the service of bettering educational opportunities of children from poor families. His efforts with this group led to the development and funding of the *Consortium for Longitudinal Studies*, a cluster of carefully designed research studies that provided evidence of the lasting effects of early intervention.

Ira Gordon was a brilliant synthesizer who worked best in a room full of bright creative thinkers. He would take the research reports, theories, guesses, and opinions of his peers and weave them into sophisticated meta-ideas that were more wise than any previously stated, yet inclusive enough of the essence of those thoughts to be immediately accepted by the group. He stands out as one of the first American academicians to harness the power of developmental research as a vehicle for social change. He was dedicated to learning how to assist, and then actually assisting, poor and undereducated parents make life better for their children.

J. Ronald Lally

Grade Retention

Whether it is called *nonpromotion*, *flunking*, *failing*, *being held back*, *the gift of time*, or *being retained*, grade retention refers to a child repeating his or her current grade level again in the following year. Despite a century of research that fails to support the effectiveness of grade retention, its use has increased over the past twenty-five years. Reasons for its dramatic increase as a contemporary educational practice include a renewed emphasis on educational standards and accountability (e.g., **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001), increased use of grade level tests determining promotion or retention, and the call to end “social promotion” (i.e., the practice of promoting students with their same age-peers although they have not mastered current grade level content). In spite of its current status as an acceptable educational practice, grade retention remains a controversial intervention strategy.

Who Is Retained and Why?

It is estimated that at least 2 million American students are retained each year, and 30–50 percent of students in some schools in the United States are

retained at least once before ninth grade. While the specific factors involved in the decision to retain an individual student vary, several individual, family, and demographic characteristics are associated with an increased risk of retention. For example, research has found that black or Hispanic male students are more likely to have been retained than their peers. Additional characteristics associated with an increased likelihood of grade retention are: (1) late birthdays, delayed development, and/or attention problems, (2) living in poverty or in a single-parent household, (3) frequent school changes and/or chronic absenteeism, (4) low parental educational attainment and/or parental involvement in education, (5) behavior problems and/or aggressive behavior or immaturity, (6) difficulties with peer relations and/or low self-confidence/self-esteem, and (7) reading problems—including those of English Language Learners.

Some children are recommended for retention when their academic performance is low or if they fail to meet grade level “performance standards” established by a school district or state. Some children may be recommended for retention if they seem socially immature, display behavior problems, or are just beginning to learn English.

Retention Outcomes

Too often, anecdotal evidence, clinical experience, and folklore overshadow the results of empirical research when discussing the merits and limitations of grade retention. Research indicates that neither grade retention nor social promotion alone is an effective strategy for improving educational success. To the contrary, most studies indicate that grade retention is not effective for addressing academic or social/emotional concerns, and, further, that retention is perceived negatively by students and is associated with negative long-term consequences. These research results are not easily understood, however, perhaps because many studies emphasize short-term gains and fail to take into account the long-term consequences of retention.

Research demonstrates that initial academic improvements may occur during the year the student is retained. However, numerous studies reveal that achievement gains decline within two to three years of retention. This means that over time, children who were retained either do not show higher achievement, or sometimes show lower achievement than similar groups of children who were not retained. For most students, the research suggests that grade retention has a negative impact on all areas of academic achievement (e.g., reading, math, and oral and written language) and social and emotional adjustment (e.g., peer relationships, self-esteem, problem behaviors, and attendance).

There is evidence of negative effects of retention on long-term school achievement and adjustment. Research demonstrates that during adolescence, the fact of having previously experienced grade retention during elementary school is associated with health-compromising behaviors such as emotional distress, low self-esteem, poor peer relations, cigarette use, alcohol and drug abuse, early onset of sexual activity, suicidal intentions, and violent behaviors. Furthermore, students who were retained are much more likely to drop out of school. Indeed, a recent review of research indicates that grade retention is one of the single most

powerful predictors of high school dropout, with retained students being five to eleven times more likely to drop out. In addition to lower levels of academic adjustment in eleventh grade and a greater likelihood of dropping out of high school, retained students are also less likely to receive a diploma by age 20. As adults, individuals who repeated a grade are more likely than adults who did not repeat a grade to be unemployed, living on public assistance, or in prison. Finally, grade retention is perceived negatively by students. In a recent study, sixth-grade students rated grade retention as one of the *most* stressful life events.

Individual Considerations

While there may be individual students who benefit from retention, there is currently no systematic means to predict accurately which children will benefit from being retained. Under certain circumstances, retention may be an appropriate educational response that can yield positive effects. For example, students who have difficulty in school because of lack of opportunity for instruction rather than lack of ability may be helped by retention. However, this assumes that the lack of opportunity is related to attendance/health or mobility problems that have been resolved and that the student is no more than one year older than classmates. Considering that research during the past century has failed to support the practice of grade retention, educational professionals must carefully weigh the evidence that potentially supports retention as the preferable choice for a particular student rather than promotion to the next grade.

Alternative Intervention Strategies

In contrast to the negative effects associated with grade retention, research provides evidence supporting other educational interventions that promote the cognitive and social competence of students. Yet neither grade retention nor social promotion is likely to enhance a child's learning without the presence of other supporting features. Research and common sense both indicate that simply having a child repeat a grade is unlikely to address the problems a child is experiencing. Likewise, simply promoting a student who is experiencing academic or behavioral problems without additional support is not likely to be an effective solution. When faced with a recommendation to retain a child, a more effective solution is to identify specific intervention strategies to enhance the cognitive and social development of the child and promote his or her learning and success at school. A combination of grade promotion and utilization of evidence-based interventions ("promotion plus") is most likely to benefit children with low achievement or behavior problems.

It is important to note that there is no single "silver bullet" intervention that will effectively address the specific needs of low-achieving students. However, the application of evidence-based interventions, selected to meet the diverse needs of individual students, will have a greater chance of facilitating the academic and socioemotional development of students at risk for school failure. It is important to note that effective practices for students at risk tend not to be qualitatively different from the best practices of general education. (See Algozzine, Ysseldyke,

and Elliott, 2002, for a review of research-based tactics for effective instruction; and see Shinn, Walker, and Stoner, 2002, for a more extensive discussion of interventions for academic and behavior problems.) The following programs and strategies are examples of evidence-based alternatives to grade retention and social promotion:

- **Parental Involvement:** Parents should be involved in their children's schools and education through frequent contact with teachers, supervision of homework, and continual communication about school activities to promote learning.
- **Early Reading Programs:** Developmentally appropriate, intensive, direct instruction strategies have been effective in promoting the reading skills of low-performing students.
- **Early Developmental and Preschool Programs:** These programs enhance language and social skills. Implementing prevention and early intervention programs is more promising than waiting for learning difficulties to accumulate. Effective preschool and kindergarten programs develop language and prereading skills using structured, well-organized, and comprehensive approaches. Research suggests that optimally programs follow students and their parents beyond kindergarten and provide support services through the primary grades.
- **Age-Appropriate and Culturally Sensitive Instructional Strategies:** Such strategies accelerate progress in the classroom.
- **Systematic Assessment Strategies:** Such strategies, including continuous progress monitoring and formative evaluation, enable ongoing modification of instructional efforts. Effective programs frequently assess student progress and modify instructional strategies accordingly.
- **School-Based Mental Health Programs:** These programs are valuable in promoting the social and emotional adjustment of children. For instance, addressing behavior problems has been found to be effective in facilitating academic performance.
- **Behavior Management and Cognitive-Behavior Modification Strategies:** These strategies reduce classroom behavior problems.
- **Student Support Teams:** These teams should include appropriate professionals to assess and identify specific learning or behavior problems, design interventions to address those problems, and evaluate the efficacy of those interventions. Effective programs tend to accommodate instruction to individual needs and maximize direct instruction.
- **Extended Year, Extended Day, and Summer School Programs:** Such programs should focus on facilitating the development of academic skills.
- **Tutoring and Mentoring Programs:** Whether with peer, cross-age, or adult tutors, these programs should focus on promoting specific academic or social skills.
- **Comprehensive School-Wide Programs:** These programs promote the psychosocial and academic skills of all students. Too often, remedial and special education services are poorly integrated with the regular education program, and, therefore, collaboration and consistency between regular, remedial, and special education are essential.

Other alternatives include mixed-age groupings and multiyear programs where students may stay with the same teacher for more than one year, thereby giving children more time before they must demonstrate "readiness" for a subsequent classroom.

Conclusion

Neither grade retention nor social promotion is an effective remedy to address the needs of children experiencing academic, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. Parents, teachers, and other professionals committed to helping all children achieve academic success and reach their full potential must discard ineffective practices (such as grade retention and social promotion) in favor of “promotion plus” specific interventions designed to address the factors that place students at risk for school failure. Parents and teachers are encouraged to actively collaborate with each other and other educational professionals to develop and implement effective alternatives to retention and social promotion. Identifying school problems early can help students to develop skills before children begin to feel like failures and improves students’ chances for success. Incorporating evidence-based interventions and instructional strategies into school policies and practices will enhance academic and adjustment outcomes for all students. *See also* Parents and Parent Involvement.

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Shane R. Jimerson, Kelly Graydon, and Sarah Pletcher

Grouping

Grouping in early childhood education refers to the ways in which young children are organized for play, learning, and instruction. How to group children is an important consideration for early childhood caregivers and teachers who aim to provide environments and interpersonal experiences that most effectively and appropriately support children’s optimal growth and development. In the United States, three common grouping schemas are traditional groupings, multiage or mixed-age groupings, and grouping for instruction.

Age Grouping

The traditional method for grouping children in schools, early childhood programs, and child-care centers is chronological grouping or grouping by age. This method of grouping is evidenced in institutional structures (such as schools and grade levels within schools), statutory requirements (such as licensing regulations

for child-care centers), and individual teacher and caregiver practice. Rationales for grouping by age are based upon the assumption, drawn from the maturationist perspective, that age is or should be the single most important factor in promoting developmental progress and positive learning outcomes. A number of common beliefs about children seem to underlie this grouping method. One belief is that children prefer to be with others their own age. A second belief is that all children of the same age have the same capabilities and the same interests. A third belief is that young children learn best when grouped chronologically because they are not intimidated by the behaviors and competencies of older children, and their developmental needs will not be ignored in favor of those of the older children.

Research aimed at providing evidence for the effectiveness of grouping by age in early childhood programs is sparse at best. Children in fact grow up in multiage groups (families) and are for the most part quite comfortable there. Further, it is well known and well documented that children, even those of the same age, have very diverse personal and cultural experiences, capabilities, and interests. And finally, a child's potential feelings of intimidation by the presence, behavior, or skills of older children can be and indeed are ameliorated by the effective strategies employed by competent, caring, and qualified teachers.

Chronological grouping of children in early education settings appears to be of benefit to teachers and caregivers. This grouping practice allows teachers and caregivers to limit their knowledge of children and child development to the specific-age group in their charge. In addition, this practice limits both the content knowledge base required of teachers and the breadth and depth of the curriculum and experiences to be planned and implemented for the children.

Multiage Grouping

Multiage grouping is known by a number of different names: family grouping, vertical grouping, heterogeneous grouping, **mixed-age grouping**, and ungraded or nongraded classrooms. This method of grouping is commonly found in family child-care homes and, to a lesser extent, in programs or classrooms for preschool-age children. It is rarely found in infant and toddler care or in kindergarten and primary classrooms. In a multiage group, the age-range of the children typically exceeds one year and the curriculum is not constrained by particular grade-level parameters. The practice of multiage grouping is based on several assumptions about its benefits to children. One assumption is that in such a group, which is characterized by a wider range of personalities and competencies, there are more opportunities for each child to form positive and meaningful relationships. A second assumption is that the multiage group offers a greater likelihood that children will have access to more and appropriate models of behavior and learning. These potential outcomes are particularly advantageous given that children's development in all domains tends to be uneven, and it is unlikely that any given child can serve as an effective model in every developmental domain. In addition, children who may be struggling with a particular developmental task or within a particular domain are less likely to be ostracized and/or feel belittled by peers in a multiage group where the broad range of development and skill acquisition is evident, expected, and accepted.

It is further assumed that children in multiage groupings will advance in social development as a result of an increased expectation for and occurrence of prosocial behaviors. Children do adjust their behaviors and language when interacting with other children they perceive as younger or less competent. Prosocial behavior fosters the development of community and serves as a deterrent to unruly and aggressive behavior. As a result, there is a reduced need for disciplinary actions and enhanced opportunities for sustained engagement in valuable learning experiences.

Finally, there are assumed benefits to cognitive and language development in the multiage grouping. Opportunities to experience more challenging cognitive tasks, to hear and use more advanced language, to receive support from a more skilled peer, and to offer support in the way of teaching a less-skilled peer are more likely to be routinely found in a multiage group. These types of opportunities provide all participants valuable support for learning.

The benefits of multiage grouping are not inherent in the grouping itself but are directly related to the knowledge, skill repertoire, and actual work of the teachers and caregivers. Teachers and caregivers must create the physical, social, and cognitive structures within the **classroom environment** that will promote and support the desired outcomes. Children will need to be guided toward the interpersonal relationships and prosocial behaviors that are associated with the anticipated social benefits. The **curriculum** needs to be conceptualized and structured so as to provide a broad range of possibilities and activities that can accommodate children at various levels of interest and competence. Younger- or less-advanced children need to be taught how to recognize when assistance is truly needed and how to seek such assistance. Older or more competent children need to be taught how to provide appropriate assistance without doing everything for the less-skilled peer. Teachers and caregivers need to be alert to the potential for learned helplessness as well as the potential for overburdening the more competent child with the expectation of providing assistance whenever requested.

There are other pitfalls that may serve as potential obstacles to realizing the benefits of multiage groupings. The actual age span represented in the group must be thoughtfully determined. If too large, the benefits may be lost. In addition, teachers and caregivers should avoid creating single-age groupings within the multiage group or separating children into their respective traditional grade levels. The advantages of the multiage grouping for children's development and learning are in large part the result of an engaging, multidimensional curriculum and meaningful interpersonal relationships and interactions.

Grouping for Instruction

Within the broader frameworks of traditional and multiage groupings is a set of options for other short-term instructional grouping practices. These options include whole class, large group, small group, pairs and triads, ability groups, and cooperative learning groups. The choice of a grouping pattern should be based on the individual needs of the children and the purpose of instruction. It is generally acknowledged that whole class and large group instruction are rarely developmentally appropriate for children in the early childhood years (birth

to eight years). Small groups, pairs and triads are potentially more appropriate and effective especially when they are constructed purposefully around children's interests, competencies, and needs, and when they are flexible as well as changeable.

Ability grouping is generally considered to be an inappropriate practice, as it runs the risk of fostering unnecessary competition in the learning environment. Ability grouping also tends to stigmatize children in terms of their (low especially) abilities and to create undesirable social barriers and attitudes. Further, ability grouping seems to be rooted in the assumption that development in all domains is simultaneous and even, and deprives all children of the rich learning opportunities inherent in diverse grouping, cooperative learning, and collaborative interactions. However, occasionally, several children have very similar instructional needs with respect to specific concepts or skills. In these cases, a short-term, ability grouping may be very appropriate as a means for meeting the individual but shared specific instructional needs of those children. In these instances, the grouping should be temporary, purposeful, and focused on a specific learning outcome.

Cooperative learning groups, whether formal or informal, provide the occasion for collaborative inquiry and effort. These types of groups can be very effective instructional strategies when they are organized around specific concepts to be learned or projects to be completed, and when attention is given to identifying the membership of each learning group. The cooperative learning group should not be an ability group, but rather a mixed group where all the children can make a contribution and benefit from the contributions of others. *See also* Development, Language; Development, Social.

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Stephanie F. Leeds

Guidance. *See* Behavior Management and Guidance

H

Hailmann, Eudora Lucas (1835–1904)

Eudora Hailmann (nee Lucas) was born into a politically liberal family that valued the education of girls. This oriented her toward improving the status of women through organizations, by professional training for kindergarten teachers, and in parent education programs. Her studies in music and art, at Miss Guthrie's School in Louisville, Kentucky, prepared her for development of methods, materials and activities used for decades in preschool and primary classes.

In 1856, Eudora married William **Hailmann**, a Swiss immigrant who was teaching at the Girls High School in Louisville. They had a daughter and three sons. When William was asked to develop a German-American Academy in 1865, he included the first **kindergarten** classroom built in the United States. As a volunteer mother, working with its Froebelian teacher from Germany, Eudora became so interested in the system that she studied it in Europe in 1866 and 1871. The Hailmann marriage then became a dual-career partnership as they promoted the humanist philosophy of Friedrich **Froebel**. William's focus was upon the elementary grades and Eudora's upon kindergarten children under the age of 7, their mothers, and their teachers.

During a period in which married women were supposed to devote themselves to maintaining the household, Eudora had unique freedom to travel and to carry out professional activities. The family moved to Milwaukee in 1873 and to Detroit in 1880 when William administered public schools and Eudora established private kindergartens with training programs. After William became Superintendent of Schools in LaPorte in 1883, they developed a nationally acclaimed curriculum from kindergarten through all grades to teacher training. Eudora also helped establish two of the first normal schools in the nation, in Oshkosh and Winona. Her speeches at the summer Chautauqua circuit and other institutes were often reprinted as bulletins for wider distribution. From 1884 until the Columbian Exposition of 1893, she coordinated displays of creative work done by kindergarten children and held demonstration classes for educational conferences and world's fairs. Between 1876 and 1893, the Hailmanns published the bimonthly

New Education as the major communication medium for the nation's Froebelian kindergartens. They established the Froebel Institute, with its first national conference in 1882. It became the Kindergarten Department of the National Educational Association (NEA) in 1884. As president of that department in 1888, Eudora was the first woman to sit on the NEA governing board. She spoke on kindergarten topics at each year's convention from 1885 until 1892.

From her studies in Europe, Eudora recognized that Froebel had developed his "gifts and occupations" with the expectation that they would be expanded by his followers. She developed wooden beads, based upon the cube, ball, and cylinder of his Second Gift, and popularized the sandbox, modeling clay, dollhouses, and small tables for group projects. With daughter Elizabeth, she wrote *Songs, Games, and Rhymes* in 1887.

President Cleveland, a Democrat, appointed William as Superintendent of Indian Schools in 1894. Because the department was severely underfunded, his entire family became unpaid staff. Eudora developed three normal schools and forty reservation kindergartens with training programs for aides and parents. William's position was terminated in 1897, after a Republican became president. Shortly afterward, Eudora had "an attack of nervous prostration" that caused her to be a housebound invalid until her death in 1905. The heritage she left includes major universities that evolved from her kindergarten training schools. Her egalitarian marriage demonstrated that wives can have successful careers. Through promoting self-directed education of young children and their teachers, Eudora Hailmann helped establish the early care and education of today.

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Dorothy W. Hewes

Hailmann, William Nicholas (1836–1920)

William Nicholas Hailmann facilitated the introduction of Froebelian methodology into American schools. Hailmann could understand Friedrich Froebel's underlying concepts and adapt them to educational methods in a different time and culture because he was fluent in both German and English.

William Hailmann grew up in a German-speaking Swiss village, encouraged to visit the nearby carpenter shop and to play in the woods. His education, based upon Johann Pestalozzi's active learning model, enabled him to graduate from the Zurich Cantonal College when he was fifteen.

He emigrated to the United States in 1852, settling in Louisville. His fluency in Italian, French, and German led to positions at the Henry Female College and the new public high school. He married Eudora Grover in 1857 and they had four children (see **Hailmann, Eudora Lucas**). When he visited his parents in 1860, he became intrigued by Froebel's philosophy of helping students at all educational levels connect the outer world and their own inner life through a process of

active learning. After brief service with the Union army during the Civil War, he developed a new German-American Academy with a Froebelian curriculum. It included one of the first **kindergartens** in the United States. In recognition of the academy's quality, he was granted an honorary master's degree from the University of Louisville in 1864.

William and Eudora Hailmann worked together as egalitarian partners to promote Froebel's controversial educational system after studying Swiss kindergartens in 1866 and 1871. This included publication of an influential newsletter, *The New Education*, from 1876 until 1893. "Although Eudora concentrated upon kindergartens, their work often merged so that it was impossible to tell whether the ideas were his or hers" (Hewes, 2001, p. 24).

After directing German-American schools in Milwaukee and Detroit, Hailmann became Superintendent of Schools in LaPorte in 1881, hired to design a model Froebelian curriculum. It included kindergartens and a teacher training institute supervised by Eudora and was soon acclaimed not only for student accomplishments but for community involvement (Rice, 1893). He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Ohio in 1885. President Cleveland appointed Hailmann as Superintendent of Indian Schools in 1894. Despite a meager budget, he devised a Froebelian system with appropriate textbooks and activities for the Indian boarding schools. Reservation kindergartens were opened with teacher training for tribal members (Hewes, 1981). After this political appointment terminated in 1898, he held several academic positions, concluding in 1914 at the Broadoaks Kindergarten Training School in Pasadena. Until his death in 1920, he continued to be professionally active.

The potential influence of organizations, especially the National Education Association (NEA), was recognized early in Hailmann's career. He gave presentations at most annual NEA meetings from 1872 until 1915. In 1872, he successfully campaigned to include women as members. He organized the Froebel Institute in 1882 and was its president when it became the Kindergarten Department of the NEA in 1885. He also coordinated a kindergarten conference during the 1883 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and was a regular presenter at summer Chautauqua tent events.

Hailmann wrote thirteen books, including *Kindergarten Culture in the Family and Kindergarten* in 1873 and *Primary Methods and Kindergarten Instruction* in 1887. In his extensively annotated 1889 translation of Froebel's *Education of Man*, Hailmann explained the original intent of such phrases as "Come, let us live for our children" as having meant living *with* them. Because he emphasized that Froebel saw self-activity as essential for education at all levels, this book became a foundation for the movement known as **Progressive Education**. His enthusiasm was for Froebel's underlying philosophy, not the manufactured products or carefully sequenced activities that characterized "traditional" kindergarten practice.

The legacy of William Hailmann has many facets. While he was in Indiana, he was instrumental in its becoming the first state to formally incorporate kindergartens into the public schools. He mentored Patty Smith Hill and other "progressive" educators who developed nursery schools and laid the foundation for today's early care and education. He promoted manual training for "hand-minded" high school students. He spoke out vigorously in favor of equal pay for women

and retirement benefits for all teachers. In his own personal life, he demonstrated the egalitarian principles that he advocated for others. “William and Eudora Hailmann took kindergarten and primary education and teacher training into a new era. Their inventive, dynamic, theoretical and practical work serves as an excellent model for early education professionals” (Lascarides and Hinitz, 2000, p. 215).

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Dorothy W. Hewes

Hall, G(ranville) Stanley (1844–1924)

Although best known as the founder of organized psychology in the United States, G. Stanley Hall should also be recognized as a major contributor to child development research and preschool methodology.

G. Stanley Hall was born on February 1, 1844. Little is known about his family or his childhood on a farm near Ashfield, Massachusetts. With financial assistance from various sources, he graduated from the Williston Academy (1862) and Williams College (1867). Study for his divinity degree from the Union Theological Seminary in New York City (1871) included several months at the University of Berlin. He taught at Antioch College (1872–1876) before concluding his formal education at Harvard University, where he was awarded America’s first Ph.D. in psychology. With further financial assistance, he returned to Germany. He had met Cornelia Fisher at Antioch and in 1879 they were married in Berlin. Upon their return from Europe, his Saturday morning lectures at Harvard presented European philosophies to Boston’s educational leaders. These led to a teaching position at John Hopkins University and to his appointment in 1888 as first president of Clark University. Hall’s seminars, held from 7:30 p.m. until midnight, were so stimulating that his graduate students claimed they couldn’t sleep afterward. Within ten years, however, Clark had awarded thirty of the fifty-four psychology doctorates in the United States.

In 1888, Hall coordinated establishment of the Child Study Association of America, popularizing the questionnaire research method that he had learned in Germany. In 1892, initial plans for the American Psychological Association were developed in his office and he became its first president. His efforts led to the 1894 organization of a Department of Child Study within the National Education Association and his many presentations at its conferences oriented teachers and administrators to his viewpoint. His extensive writings in a wide variety of publications are documented by Ross (1972) and others.

Hall’s introduction to the **kindergarten** was in Germany, where popular training programs were based upon Friedrich **Froebel**’s belief that children learn through

self-activity. This is reflected in the positions taken by John Dewey, Arnold Gesell, and others who were his students. It is sometimes stated that he was an opponent of the Froebelians. However, it was the symbolism and “mechanical depersonalized instruction” that he deplored. He made his position clear in such statements as “I believe heart and soul in the kindergarten as I understand it, and insist that I am a true disciple of Froebel, but that my orthodoxy is the real doxy which, if Froebel could now come to New York, Chicago, Worcester, or even to Boston, he would approve” (Hall, 1911, p 16).

While in Germany, Hall also studied Haeckle’s theory that “ontology recapitulates phylogeny” as an explanation for developmental stages. This means that individuals replicate progression of the human race from simians to an integrated society. Accordingly, formal education should not begin until about age 8. Although highly controversial when first proposed, this fits into the philosophy of the liberal Froebelians and is similar to stages later described by Jean Piaget and others.

The introduction of psychoanalysis into the United States came when Hall invited Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung to a conference in 1909. Activities for self-expression and “acting out” of inner emotions were incorporated into preschool classrooms by the 1940s. This supported the original Froebelian concept of “making the inner outer and the outer inner” through interpreting children’s activities.

Hall’s most direct influence upon today’s early childhood education resulted from an 1894 summer session at Clark University. Thirty-five kindergarten leaders accepted his invitation. All dropped out after the first day except Anna Bryan and Patty Smith Hill. They developed a developmentally appropriate curriculum that was not implemented until 1926, when Hill’s Committee on Nursery Schools convened. This group became today’s **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), which maintains much of that original 1894 plan in its mission statement and the criteria for accreditation. *See also* Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Dorothy W. Hewes

Hawkins, David (1913–2002) and Hawkins, Frances Pockman (1913–)

Philosopher, mathematician, historian, physicist, educator, essayist, David Hawkins was a man of many talents. Together with his wife, Frances P. Hawkins, an early childhood teacher and writer, he made many contributions to the fields of early childhood and elementary education. David studied philosophy, physics, and mathematics, and earned a Ph.D. in probability theory at University of California in Berkeley. For most of his career, he was a professor of philosophy,

science, and mathematics. He served on the faculty of the University of Colorado at Boulder for thirty-five years. While at Boulder and in forays elsewhere, he frequently turned his attention to the education of children and teachers. He was the recipient of numerous awards, including a MacArthur Award in 1986 for his work in philosophy and childhood science education.

Frances P. Hawkins studied education at San Francisco State College. She taught **kindergarten** and preschool classes for many years, with children of diverse economic and cultural backgrounds in a range of settings. A thoughtful and passionate observer of young children in action, Frances wrote articles and two books about her experiences as a teacher.

During the early 1960s, David worked on a curriculum development and science education reform project called the Elementary Science Study (ESS) in Wattertown, Massachusetts. Frances accompanied him as a consultant to this project while also helping start a kindergarten in the South End of Boston, at that time a very poor section of the city. The ESS project drew together a diverse and talented group of scientists, university educators and classroom teachers (including, among others, Jerrold Zacharias, Philip Morrison, and Eleanor Duckworth), who came together to create science education materials for the young.

The idea that guided the ESS project was the notion that children could actually *do* science, that science was a matter of inquiry and investigation in which children could meaningfully participate. Influenced by the ideas of John Dewey and the work of Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, and others, the ESS group created materials that were innovative in their time for their focus on investigation and inquiry in the immediate contexts of daily life. With titles like “Peas and Particles” and “Kitchen Physics,” ESS brought real science and scientific method, observation, inquiry, exploration, and analysis into the everyday environments of children and teachers. The science curriculum plans and activities were notable also for their playful, interdisciplinary approaches that built on and fostered an exploratory approach to learning with materials designed to engage children’s curiosity across a range of subject matters. Children were seen as capable investigators rather than as recipients of rote knowledge. Although the ESS units have not been in print since the 1980s, the work served as a foundation for decades of curriculum development materials in science and other disciplines, and its perspectives continue to be valued among some constituencies in ongoing debates about curriculum and instruction for the young.

ESS took place during a fertile and optimistic time in education not only in the United States but elsewhere. David and Frances served as consultants to related curriculum reform initiatives in science education in schools in Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda, and in schools supporting inquiry-oriented learning for children in Leicestershire, England.

In the 1970s, David and Frances founded and directed a center at the University of Colorado for the professional development of teachers, The Mountain View Center for Environmental Education. This Center provided workshops and advanced learning experiences for teachers of elementary and preschool children, and for sixteen years published a journal, *Outlook* (1970–1986), notable for its inclusion of the voices of teachers writing about teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Later Frances and David also visited the preprimary programs of **Reggio Emilia**, Italy, where David became friendly with Loris **Malaguzzi**. Malaguzzi references Hawkins as a source of his understandings about teaching and learning (in Edwards, Gandini, and Forman, 1998, pp. 78, 86).

Both David and Frances wrote extensively. Frances' first book, *The Logic of Action* (1969, 1986), vividly recounts her learning encounters with six deaf children. Her second book, *Journey with Children* (1997) is her memoir about her lifelong work and dedication to the education of young children.

David wrote numerous essays about teaching and learning. Collected in several volumes (Hawkins, 1974, 2000), the essays are rich with insights about the human capacity to learn. Among the most famous, "I, Thou and It" (1967, 1974) addresses the relationship between teacher and learner and also of a third entity in this triangular relationship, the "it" of the content of learning, in which the teacher-learner relationship is focused and defined. Resonant with sociocultural theory, the essay eloquently communicates the importance of subject matter as a defining context for the teacher-child relationship. In "Messing About in Science" (1965, 1974) David was an early proponent of the value of free play as a significant element of scientific exploration. Deeply committed to the value of exploration in learning, Hawkins said of curriculum development, "You don't want to cover a subject; you want to uncover it" (quoted in Duckworth, 1987, p. 7).

In addition to their work in education, David and Frances were both lifelong peace activists. David served as historian to the Manhattan project in 1945-1946, but turned away from its focus on weaponry. Both Frances and David were called upon to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1950, during its anti-Communist investigations. Both refused to name any names of people they had known to be Communists unless these names had already been cited by the committee (*New York Times*, March 4, 2002).

Frances' activist stance was also embedded in her teaching and throughout her writing, as she eloquently fought for the opportunities that teachers have to make a difference in the lives of young children whom society has rejected or neglected. In "the Eye of the Beholder" (1979), for example, Frances addresses the failure of schools and society to adequately serve children with special needs. At the root of her approach as a teacher is her affirmation that "within the child, within the classroom, and within myself, seen altogether, there exists the potential and promise of new growth and development" (pp. 11-12).

Throughout their careers, and grounded in their experiences, both David and Frances Hawkins retained their hope for what schools can provide. They maintained their belief in the role that thoughtful teaching can play in the lives of children when combined with observation, inquiry, curiosity about children and subject matter, and, especially, joy. *See also* Curriculum, Science; Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Mary Eisenberg

Head Start

Head Start is a comprehensive child development program that serves families with children from birth to five years. It is the longest lasting social program remaining from the 1960s Kennedy–Johnson era. Its primary goal has been to increase school **readiness** of young children in low-income families. All Head Start programs must adhere to federal Program Performance Standards. These standards define the services that Head Start Programs provide and identify the seven program components. This program has served 23 million children and their families since its inception.

Head Start began in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty program launched by President Lyndon Johnson. The program was conceived by a panel of child development experts who were invited by President Johnson to draw up a model to help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children. Project Head Start was initially launched as an eight-week summer program for children aged three to five and their families. It was designed to help break the cycle of **poverty** by providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, intellectual, language, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. Head Start was developed in response to specific political, economic, and social pressures in the 1960s (Elkind, 1986) as well as new understandings about child development. From the start the program has been affected by politics, budget allocations, differing expectations about its purpose, and questions about its impact on children and their communities (Bee, 1981; Clemitt, 2005; Collins, 1989; McKey et al., 1985).

In 1965, Head Start enrollment was 561,000 and had a budget of \$96.4 million. By fiscal year 2005, enrollment had grown to 906,993 and by fiscal year 2006 the budget appropriation had increased to more than \$6.5 billion for programs, and an additional \$231 million for training and technical assistance, research and demonstration projects, and monitoring and program reviews. This works out to an average cost per child of \$7287 (2005).

During the 2004–2005 Head Start program year, 12.5 percent of the Head Start enrollment consisted of children with disabilities, nearly 49,000 children participated in home-based Head Start program services, and 91 percent of Head Start children had health insurance. Over 890,000 parents volunteered in their local Head Start program, more than 207,000 fathers were involved in regularly

scheduled program activities, and 27 percent of Head Start program staff members were parents of current or former Head Start children.

In 1994, a reauthorization of the Head Start Act established a new **Early Head Start** program for low-income families with infants and toddlers. In Fiscal Year 2005, \$684 million was used to support more than 650 programs to provide Early Head Start child development and family support services in all fifty states and in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. These programs served nearly 62,000 children under the age of 3. A historical strength of Project Head Start is its emphasis on family and community participation, as Head Start mandates parent involvement, including parent and community participation on parent governing councils. Because Head Start was conceived as part of the Community Action Programs in the Office of Economic Opportunity, community empowerment was a goal. However, over the years, Head Start programs have received praise as well as criticism for their flexibility of programming and involvement of the community in management. Over its forty-year history, Head Start has been consistent in its focus on a comprehensive developmental program that has included academic, health, and social initiatives for preschool age children, as well as parent and community involvement.

Head Start programs have focused, since the beginning, on children's health and dental care, **parent involvement**, parent councils, employment opportunities for children's parents, **family literacy** programs, **inclusion** of children with, special needs and programs for English Language Learners. Despite many debates, the most consistent framing of goals and recommended pedagogical approaches for children has been in terms of a comprehensive approach toward health and child developmental goals, or the "whole child"—physical, socioemotional, language, cognitive, and academic development were all considered important in the education of young children (see debates in Vinovskis, 2005; Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; and the most recent debates summarized in Zigler and Styfco, 2004). While Vinovkis' (2005) history of Head Start shows that academic aims have been an important part of the debate related to curriculum in Head Start since its inception, fostering the development of the "whole child," including preventive health and dental care, has been a long-term belief in Head Start, bolstered by evidence that this was an educational and cost-effective approach to quality early education for low-income children (see debates and evidence for and against this point in Zigler and Styfco, 2004). National guidelines focusing on developmentally appropriate practice (see Bredekamp and Copple, 1997) reinforced the "whole child" curricular approach as "best practice" for *all* children. Therefore, until recently Head Start has emphasized a curriculum that fostered socioemotional development through play, the fostering of positive self-esteem, peer as well as adult relationships, and an integrated developmental approach to language development, cognitive development, and early literacy and numeracy knowledge (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992).

Late twentieth and early twenty-first century research on cognitive learning (National Research Council, 2001) and children's eagerness to learn, as well as research on prevention of early reading failures (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998) focused attention on children's capacity for greater cognitive and academic learning

in Head Start programs, and in preschool programs, more generally. Recent research (see the synthesis by the National Research Council, 2001) focused attention on the importance of teacher training and teacher qualifications in early childhood education for delivery of a “high quality” program and desired child development and academic outcomes. Therefore, the low number of “qualified” Head Start teachers and teaching aides with bachelor’s degrees or associate degrees in early childhood related fields has been highlighted as one reason Head Start children continued to have academic problems compared to middle-income peers when entering school (see National Research Council, 2001; Zigler and Styfco, 2004). It is argued that Head Start teachers were also insufficiently trained in early **literacy**, numeracy, or even in **socioemotional development** to produce sufficient, desirable long-term effects comparable to other experimental high-quality programs for young children (all of which had much higher costs per child and per teacher than the federally funded and much larger national Head Start program).

At its inception in the 1960s there were also debates about whether Head Start should be administered by the Office of Education, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), or by the Office of Economic Opportunity, where it eventually was situated as part of the Community Action Program. In 1970, Head Start was moved to HEW’s Office of Child Development, directed by Edward Zigler. By the 1990s, Head Start had become part of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHS). Arguments continue as to whether it should be moved to the Office of Education and become more focused on readiness for school, and school academics. In the spring of 2006, Head Start, still in DHS, was moved to the section focusing on welfare policies, which administers federal funds for **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families** (TANF). This move reinforces a federal welfare policy that focuses on the *temporary* nature of federal assistance to low-income working families and their children for assistance to find and maintain employment, and for child-care or preschool education. It also integrates the Head Start program with other federally and state funded programs focused on low-income and “working poor” families.

Head Start began as a large-scale program that involved a large number of children from its first summer in 1965, and has continued to be a large social program throughout its forty-year history. Though Head Start has increased its coverage of children over the years, it has included from one-third to one-half of all eligible low-income children, in largely half-day programs. By beginning quickly and targeting many children and through involvement of community and parent members, including employment of parents as teacher aides or assistants, Head Start built a large community support-base, potentially at the cost of the “quality” of the teachers and their training to teach certain skills to children (see debates on these points in Delpit, 1995; Zigler and Styfco, 2004). The decisions to move quickly, to be comprehensive in aims, and to involve parents and community in multiple ways had many perceived advantages and positive effects. They also had some perceived disadvantages that are part of continuing debates and reforms (Vinovskis, 2005; Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Zigler and Styfco, 2004). *See also* Child Development Group of Mississippi; National Head Start Association.

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Michael Kalinowski, Marianne Bloch, and Ko Eun Kim

High/Scope

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is an independent nonprofit organization that was founded by David P. Weikart in 1970 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. High/Scope's mission is to lift lives through education and its vision is a world in which all educational settings use active, participatory learning so everyone has a chance to succeed in life and contribute to society. The Foundation engages in curriculum development, research, training, publishing, and communication. In the High/Scope educational model, learners plan, do, and review their actions; engage in activities at their own developmental levels; and receive support and respect from others. High/Scope has developed and spread its educational model for young children in preschool programs, infants and toddlers in home visit programs and child-care settings, children in elementary schools, and teenagers in summer camps. Studies by High/Scope and others have confirmed the short-term and long-term effectiveness of these applications. The organization's periodical *High/Scope ReSource* is available upon request from High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 600 North River Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898, phone 734-485-2000, fax 734-485-0704. For further information, see its website at www.highscope.org. See also High/Scope Perry Preschool Study.

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High/Scope Perry Preschool Study

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study is regarded as one of the pioneering studies of the long-term effects of high-quality preschool programs for young children living in poverty. This study was begun by David P. Weikart and colleagues in 1962, at a time when people had started thinking about the possibilities of fighting poverty through early childhood education. The design of the study builds on random assignment of 123 children to one of two groups—one that received a high-quality preschool program at ages 3 and 4 or one that did not. Data have been collected annually from ages 3 to 11, and at 14, 15, 19, 27 and 40, with only 6 percent of data missing. The program maintained high quality with systematic use of an educational model, certified teachers each serving 5–6 children, and weekly home visits. Compared to those without the program, program participants were more ready for school, required fewer placements for mental impairment, and later achieved greater school success. Beyond schooling, compared to the no-program group, the program group committed only half as many crimes, and had higher employment rates and earnings at ages 27 and 40. Taken together, these findings add up to a substantial economic return of \$17 per dollar invested, including \$13 to taxpayers. The study has served as a model for other studies, and the program has served as a model for other programs. Results of the study have been disseminated widely and have been used to advocate for high-quality early childhood education. *See also* High/Scope.

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Lawrence J. Schweinhart

Hill, Patty Smith (1868–1946)

Patty Smith Hill was a well-known figure in the **Kindergarten** Movement of the late nineteenth century and an advocate of progressivism within the International Kindergarten Union. In the first decades of the twentieth century, as Head of the Department of Kindergarten Education at Teachers College Columbia, she became a leader in efforts to professionalize early childhood education and improve the status of teachers.

Hill was born in 1868 in Anchorage, a small town outside Louisville, Kentucky, where her parents Mary Jane Smith Hill and William Wallace Hill had founded the Bellewood School for Young Ladies in 1861. During her early years, her family lived a prosperous and untroubled life at Bellewood. Their security ended in

1874 when her father decided to pursue his career in the West. The Hills and their six children moved to Missouri and then to Texas. William suffered a series of financial setbacks, his health failed, and he died in 1879. Mary Jane and the children returned to Kentucky and spent the next several years struggling with poverty and recurrent illness. Support from her grandparents finally enabled Hill to attend Louisville Collegiate Institute and complete Kindergarten training.

In 1888, Hill became the Head Teacher at the Holcombe Mission Kindergarten in Louisville and began to introduce innovations within a traditional Froebelian context. Influenced by her studies at summer institutes with Colonel Francis Parker and G. Stanley Hall, she designed a sequence of classroom activities tied to child development. She published her observations in *The Kindergarten Review*, became the Director of the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association, and demonstrated her successful classroom methods at the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Educators from across the country came to Louisville to see Hill's classroom. John Dewey visited in 1893 and Hill went to study with him at the University of Chicago the following summer.

By the turn of the century, Hill's challenges to Froebelian orthodoxy had become well known and were threatening to split the Kindergarten Movement. Within the International Kindergarten Union, in contrast to the "Uniform Plan" advocated by traditionalist Susan Blow, Hill was urging teachers to adopt an experimental approach and adjust their curricula to the special needs and social circumstances of the child. The controversy continued when Hill, "that young radical in the South," and Blow were invited to offer a joint course in Kindergarten practices at Teachers College Columbia (TCC). In the "friendly warfare" that followed, Hill's engaging style and more up-to-date views won over the students and faculty in attendance.

Hill was appointed to the TCC faculty in 1905, was elected president of the International Kindergarten Union (IKU) in 1908, and became Head of TCC's Department of Kindergarten Education in 1910. At Columbia, she developed a rigorous course of study for early childhood students, built a highly respected graduate program, and maintained strong connections with the public schools. During the final years of her career, she worked with colleagues to establish an experimental college and, as part of that effort, directed a community-based nursery school program in the impoverished Manhattenville neighborhood. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Columbia in 1929 and retired in 1935.

During her long career, Patty Smith Hill established model classrooms, teacher training institutes, and cooperative community centers that drew national and international attention. She authored stories and songs for children, including "Good Morning to You" and "Happy Birthday to You," designed child-appropriate classroom furniture and learning equipment, and conducted observational studies of young children at play. She wrote extensively on curricula and pedagogy. Her collaborations with other educators resulted in two collections that defined the early scholarship within the field of early childhood education: *Experimental Studies in Kindergarten Education* and *A Conduct Curriculum for the Kindergarten and First Grade*. See also Froebel, Friedrich.

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Susan Douglas Franzosa

History of U.S. Early Childhood Care and Education

Multiple histories can be written of early childhood education—for example, histories based on those individuals whose leadership helped advance the availability and quality of early childhood programs; histories based on significant, defining events; histories of the field's disparate delivery systems (kindergartens, child care, preschools); and histories that chronicle the evolution of public policies on behalf of young children and their early education. None of these approaches, however, individually or collectively, could be adequately captured by an encyclopedia entry. This entry responds to this quandary by providing an overview of the history of early childhood care and education; it targets two elements of the field that have fashioned its history and are shaping its future: (1) the ebb and flow of public interest in young children's early education and (2) continuity of professional values.

Historical Overview

The U.S. history of early childhood education spans from the nation's beginning. Its emergence as a distinct professional interest in the late 1800s is tied to the beginning of the child study movement and the first systematic studies of children; efforts to develop the world's first system of "common schools"; and onset of a scientific approach to education.

Early childhood education as an area of professional interest began to solidify in the early 1900s. Yet it remained a relatively small and obscure area of interest marked by intermittent spurts of federal attention in response to national events such as the Great Depression in the 1930s, World War II, White House Conferences on Children each decade between 1909 and 1980, and efforts to reduce welfare dependency by families in need of child care because of requirements to enter the workforce. These periods of attention reflect our nation's crisis orientation to policymaking. Early childhood education issues tend to be viewed as important during national emergencies, times of economic stress, and in response to perceptions of family dysfunction.

Further, the pervasive national culture has held—and still holds—that families should care for their own children. Child rearing, including child care and early education, were, and are, viewed as a private responsibility. When President Richard Nixon vetoed comprehensive child development legislation in 1972, he asserted that "for the federal government to plunge headlong financially into supporting child development would commit the vast moral authority of the National Government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing and against the family-centered approach" (Washington, 1984, p. 256).

This orientation has meant that public interest in issues related to early education has ebbed and flowed, sporadically called forth by issues of sufficient concern to overcome the nation's reticence to "interfere" with families' child-rearing responsibilities and obligations. It has also severely limited the creation of public policies that recognize early childhood education as a public good.

Defining characteristics of the early childhood profession. Two overarching characteristics help define the early childhood field: the gender of its members and the delivery system for services. First, from its inception, the history of early childhood care and education has been shaped by the fact that it has been viewed as a profession for women. Women have been perceived as naturally inclined to be early childhood teachers because the knowledge required for this role seems so similar to—if not duplicative of—the mother's role. To the extent that women's roles in U.S. society have been marginalized and the belief prevails that the ability to mother is innate, recognition and respect for the expertise required to work effectively with young children has been absent. It follows that limited support has existed to require formal credentials or to expect compensation comparable to other professionals doing similar work. This circumstance has made it difficult to build a professional image for early childhood education that resonates with the general public as worthy of its support and respect.

Second, and also from its inception, the field's history has been shaped by distinct, even though somewhat overlapping, histories of its disparate systems for delivering early childhood programs: kindergartens, child care (formerly called day nurseries), and preschools (formerly called nursery schools). More than just differences in program type and purpose are involved; these programs have been delivered by different sponsors and, until recently, have served different children. As a result, the early childhood field is an amalgam of different cultures, purposes, professional expectations, governance structures, and funding mechanisms whose specifics are often shaped by issues of race and class.

The presence of distinctive genealogical lines and developmental histories for its component parts has challenged the field of early childhood care and education to function in an unified way on behalf of children and the early childhood profession. The fragmented character of the field also has influenced its ability to manage the ebb and flow of public interest in early childhood education.

Mobilizing sustained public support. During the 1960s, a confluence of factors once again energized public interest in early childhood education. Early childhood programs expanded exponentially, propelled by newfound recognition of the important contribution of the environment to the first years of development, the explosion of women into the labor force, the "discovery" of poverty in the United States, and movements for social justice. This expansion, driven largely by the birth of Head Start and growing demand for child care, built on the early childhood field's history of creating programs for children with distinctive auspices or sponsors and different sources of funding. Perpetuating previous patterns of growth, the field's various components grew in parallel fashion, including child-care, preschool programs, and **Head Start**.

By the 1970s, the principle of public responsibility for children's positive development and school readiness gained greater credence, though still far from universal acceptance. A series of national reports, including a prominent 1977 Carnegie Council on Children publication, helped promote increased awareness of the consequences associated with the historical disposition to insulate family matters from public policy. Child development specialists and other advocates used the opportunity to argue for a universal and developmental philosophy of care for children.

In practice, though, access most often has been accorded to families based on their income level, with children's and families' personal characteristics also being key to defining eligibility for publicly funded programs. These programs largely have been viewed as interventions for transforming the lives of poor children or of their families.

The ongoing creation of separate early childhood programs and funding streams—in this instance based on race and class—congealed the fragmented base that undergirds the delivery of early care and education programs in the United States. The framing of publicly funded early education as compensatory intervention for “at risk” children and/or as support for the employment of low income parents thwarted advocates' efforts to promote optimal human development as an overriding purpose and function of early childhood education. It also directed attention away from development of the systems needed to nurture and sustain the field's capacity on behalf of young children.

In the 1980s, momentum around early childhood issues stalled despite the landmark creation of several Congressional organizational structures to observe, report and act on the status of children (the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families; the Senate Children's Caucus; and the Senate Family Caucus). Diminished by federal priorities that shifted public investments away from early childhood care and education, it would be almost twenty years after Nixon's 1972 presidential veto of the Comprehensive Child Development Act before Congress enacted new federal legislation focused solely on child care: the 1990 Comprehensive Child Care and Development Block Grant.

As the 1990s progressed, congressional focus on welfare reform legislation redirected attention to the needs of working women, especially low-income women who lacked the resources to pay for good child care. This deliberation helped place a spotlight on the field's issues of program availability, quality, and supply (especially for infants and toddlers). At about the same time, public awareness of research on early brain development, accompanied by new studies on the positive impact of high-quality early childhood programs (especially for children from impoverished environments) sparked renewed public interest in children's earliest years of development. A rush of new public and private investments in early childhood programs and initiatives ensued.

Perhaps most prominent of these is the current movement to make prekindergarten programs universally available for all children, thus harking back to the field's targeted efforts in the late 1800s and early 1900s to expand the availability of kindergarten. Similarly, the emphasis is on state-level activity on behalf of early care and education, and many states have increased their investments in services for young children. This activity has occurred, in part, in response to growing

appreciation for the importance of the first five years of children's lives and its relationship to school **readiness**.

By the year 2000, forty-three states had invested state dollars in prekindergarten programs. Additionally, thirty-one states had invested state funds for child development and family support programs for infants and toddlers. Importantly, these new programs are increasingly blurring historical distinctions between child care and preschool. This latest surge of interest in early childhood issues is being dampened, however, by an economic downturn and changing political landscape.

Continuity of Professional Values

Throughout the fluctuations of public attention to early care and education, the early childhood field has evolved its own cultural framework. From its earliest beginnings, the early care and education field has operated from a core set of values that have become embedded in its professional culture and helped shape its historical trajectory. These values currently are being scrutinized publicly to an extent never before experienced. This scrutiny reflects both changing circumstances and expectations for public accountability tied to escalating public investment in early childhood programs.

The core values in the early care and education profession can be captured under two headings: holistic approach to child development and collaborative relationships with families. The continuity of these values has led both to stability over time of professional perspectives and to resistance to external calls for change, creating on the one hand a sense of cohesion among members of the field and, on the other hand, perceptions of intransigence by nonmembers.

Holistic approach to child development. The early childhood field has valued an integrated focus on children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development—what is called a “whole child” approach. Articulating this holistic focus as a respect for children, the founding pedagogies of the Froebelian kindergarten and progressive education have had an enduring impact on the field.

The ideas of Friedrich **Froebel**, recognized as the father of kindergarten, came to the United States from Germany in the mid-1880s. At this time in the history of early childhood education, nursery schools did not yet exist. These programs did not emerge until the 1920s and even then they were laboratories for child study. In the mid- to late 1800s and early 1900s, the field was focused on expanding the availability of kindergartens based on the idealistic pedagogy of Friedrich Froebel, building on the successful launch in 1893 of the first public school kindergarten in St. Louis. Froebel's approach to early education dominated until the early 1900s when interest in a more scientific and less-philosophical approach to education spawned a greater focus on children as individuals. This “new approach” to early education was informed by scientific study of the child rather than on the child's embodiment of universal features of humanity that were to be carefully nurtured. The field's intense internal debate on Froebel's approach to early education and what became the progressive approach to early education—heralded today under the banner of developmentally appropriate practice—is captured in a defining report authorized by the International Kindergarten Union in 1913. Despite their

differences, however, both approaches to early education viewed the child holistically and as the center of the educational enterprise—a value that has endured to the present.

This holistic approach to children's early education has been challenged on numerous occasions and often placed early childhood leaders on the defensive. In the 1960s, new research on the environment's impact on early development, in conjunction with growing awareness of poverty and interest in ameliorating it, led to experimental interventions. A diverse array of newly constructed early childhood program models proposed to alter the direction of children's early development and support their school readiness. Many of these approaches focused on curriculum content the model's designer—often an individual from outside the early childhood field—thought children should learn or on specific instructional practices.

These new program models frequently ignored the field's focus on the whole child, often touting their own approaches by contrasting them with the "traditional" (i.e., old-fashioned) child-centered and developmental approach long associated with early childhood education. It was argued that traditional early childhood programs were too focused on **play**, and not sufficiently focused on learning outcomes, to eliminate the educational gaps presented by poor children. Early childhood educators bemoaned the way their knowledge base and experience were being ignored by relatively new entrants into the field.

Support for the field's child-centered and developmental approach to early education emerged, however, in the early 1980s from research on the long-term positive impact of child-centered approaches to early education. These research findings deflected—for the time being—criticisms of early childhood educators' views on best practice. The **National Association for the Education of Young Children's** (NAEYC) successful 1987 publication on **developmentally appropriate practice** further helped the early childhood field reclaim the validity of its child-centered approach and reinforced its historical reliance on developmental theory as the primary informant for educational decision-making.

By the 1990s, the success of NAEYC's publication ignited new challenges to the early childhood field's holistic approach to early education. A group of researchers known as reconceptualists challenged the field's over reliance on theories of child development and successfully opened the field's reception to the impact of factors such as race, class, and gender on children's development. Simultaneously, the nation became increasingly aware of and concerned about racial achievement gaps. In response, the centrality of literacy development—versus the "whole child"—was established in prominent federal legislation called the **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001.

In contrast to the 1960s, when limited evidence existed to confirm the validity of the field's focus on the whole child, strong evidence now exists to support essential linkages between children's emotional, social, and intellectual capabilities. Yet given current political circumstances and a focus on child outcomes, sustainability in its current form of the field's long-standing commitment to a child-centered developmental approach may be at risk.

Families as collaborators in promoting children's development. Just as early educators value the whole child, they also highly value the child's integral relationship

with his or her family. Early childhood educators always have viewed families as central to the successful development of young children and as essential partners to the success of early childhood education. Early expressions of this partnership were seen in efforts to share newly emerging scientific knowledge of children's development with mothers so they could use this knowledge in their child rearing, thereby optimizing children's developmental potential.

To advance what was a novel idea in 1923, Lawrence Frank, of the New York-based Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, launched an extensive parent education campaign. Similarly, nursery school programs, the majority of which served as lab sites for campus-based developmental psychologists, partnered with mothers in using the new research on child development to foster children's positive growth. Recognizing the importance of the home environment to children's development, and parents' unique knowledge and understanding of their own child, nursery and kindergarten teachers also routinely visited children in their homes to learn more about them and identify ways they could incorporate children's interests into the classroom setting.

Given differences in their formal knowledge of child development, the nature of the teacher-parent relationship often became one in which the early childhood teacher was the source and giver of knowledge, and the parent the recipient. The imbalance in this relationship intensified during the 1960s and beyond when parent education was elevated as an intervention strategy to help low-income preschoolers—most often poor black children—develop social and cognitive skills needed for school readiness.

Simultaneously, however, in conjunction with the 1960s Civil Rights movement, low-income parents were recognized as important allies in promoting the importance of early childhood education. Further, in acknowledgment of new insights on child development informed by the fields of sociology and anthropology, plus a retreat from assumptions of parental ignorance, parents' central roles in their children's development began to be recast. This updated view of parental importance was captured in 1965 with the launch of Project Head Start, the country's first federally funded early childhood program. Head Start's emphasis on families' centrality to child development and reliance on family members as decision makers, as well as implementers, in important program issues, reaffirmed the early childhood field's commitment to families and raised its commitment to a new level.

It must be noted, though, that parents' value as collaborators is facing extensive pressure as an ideal not easily accomplished in practice, considering the expense, time, skill, and commitment required. And, the increasing number of parents in the workforce, along with public policy changes requiring poor parents to work to receive public support, has lessened the availability of parent time and energy for parent involvement in their children's education.

Conclusion

No longer a small and obscure field, early childhood education programs now face increased scrutiny. Rising public expectations for consistent, high-level performance place new demands on early childhood education as a field, present new

challenges, and offer new opportunities to integrate high-quality early childhood care and education into the national landscape. The growth of public interest and expanded investments in early childhood education is accompanied by increased expectations for program accountability. Based on research on early brain development and evaluation studies of early childhood education, increased pressure exists for children to come to kindergarten prepared to be successful with academic demands.

Major gains have been accomplished with significant new investments by federal and state governments as well as by increased private sector support. Nevertheless, despite more than a century of effort to elevate the importance of early childhood care and education, the United States still lacks a comprehensive system of services to ensure that all young children receive the high quality of programs they need and deserve. Seizing future opportunities will require advocates to find ways to engage and sustain public interest and commitment to early care and education.

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Stacie G. Goffin and Valora Washington

Hunt, Joseph McVicker (1906–1991)

Joseph McVicker Hunt, a developmental psychologist best known for his work with infants and young children, was born in Nebraska in 1906. He received his BA (1929) and MA (1930) degrees from the University of Nebraska and a Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1933. He went on to pursue post-doctoral work at the New York Psychiatric Institute and Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts. He was on the faculty of Brown University from 1936 to 1946. His final faculty appointment was at the University of Illinois (1951–1974) where he taught psychology and education courses. He received numerous awards for his work through psychological and mental health foundations, including two awards for

excellence in research from the American Personnel and Guidance Association, the **G. Stanley Hall** award from Division 7 (APA), and the Gold Medal for lifetime achievement from the American Psychological Foundation.

Throughout his career, Hunt pursued his two most enduring interests—psychopathology, and the study of the long-term effects of early experience on later development. His interest in psychopathology began during his undergraduate and graduate work as he researched the effects of abnormal psychology on intellectual development. Hunt was intrigued by **Freud's** contention that early experience had a deep impact on development. Building upon these ideas, Hunt proceeded to design a series of feeding-frustration experiments using rat pups. He put the young pups on a feeding deprivation schedule for a few days followed by normal feeding into adulthood. He found that when he placed the adult rats on a feeding deprivation schedule, they began to hoard food pellets, a behavior that was uncharacteristic in normal rats. He postulated that this was the effect of the early experiences of deprivation. This finding led Hunt to expand his thinking into the effects of such negative environments on the development of young children.

At about this same time, Hunt was asked to teach a course on infant development, which prompted his interest in the work of Jean **Piaget**. Through his rat studies, Hunt had recognized the impact of early experiences on personality development. He expanded his thinking into the development of intellect and began to doubt the prevailing view of the static and predetermined nature of the intellect. When Hunt moved to the University of Illinois in 1951, he began investigating factors that might influence the development of the intellect, such as child-rearing practices, poverty, and the accessibility of educational stimulation. *Intelligence and Experience*, published in 1961, was the result of this work. In this book, Hunt suggested that intelligence was an information-processing system effected by environmental influences during development. The ideas presented laid the foundation for such educational movements as **Project Head Start** and the later Follow Through Project for school-aged children. Based on his research, Hunt was selected to chair the Presidential Task Force on Child Development that produced “A Bill of Rights for Children” in 1967.

Hunt strongly believed in the relevance of research in supporting theoretical assumptions, so he set forth on a number of projects to further his understanding of early development. He evaluated the development of infants placed in orphanages in both Greece and Iran who were being raised with only minimal attention to psychological needs. During these examinations, Hunt began to doubt the relevance of norm-referenced tests to the information he desired. In order to better understand the influence of different environmental stimuli, Hunt felt that new methods of evaluating development were needed. Working with one of his students, Ina C. Uzgiris, he developed the Ordinal Scales of Psychological Development (1975) based on the particular abilities that develop during the sensori-motor stage as defined by Piaget.

Hunt retired from his position at the University of Illinois in 1974, but remained an active professor emeritus until his death in 1991. At the time of his death he was still at work on a book that was to be called *Behavior Science and Child Rearing*, a summary of what his research could offer as advice to parents and teachers. He

also had started another work to be titled *Motivation and Experience*, describing his work in the area of intrinsic motivation and its effect on development. Both of these works detailed his belief that psychological science should be used to influence public policy and individual practices for the education of young children.

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Martha Latorre

Hymes, James L., Jr. (1913–1998)

James L. Hymes Jr. was an avowed developmentalist committed to addressing children's social, emotional, and physical needs as a means of enhancing children's cognitive growth. Hymes believed that healthy socioemotional relationships with children were the starting point for effective education and constructive social change. James Lee Hymes, Jr., was born August 3, 1913, and grew up in New York City. After graduating from Harvard University in 1934, he subsequently earned his Master's and Doctorate in Child Development and Parent Education from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1936 and 1946, respectively. In 1936, he was Assistant State Supervisor of the Works Progress Association Nursery Schools in New York under Ruth Andrus (Hymes Personal Papers). He then worked as Assistant Executive Secretary for the Progressive Education Association (1937) and later as editor of *Progressive Education* (1940–1942) and *Frontiers of Democracy*.

As World War II escalated, the need for child care for the children of working mothers increased. Shipyard owner Edgar Kaiser hired Hymes as Director for two 24-hour child-care facilities in Portland, Oregon. The Kaiser Child Service Centers opened in November 1943 and were groundbreakers on several fronts. The Centers had quality indoor and outdoor play equipment and all teachers were degreed. An on-staff nutritionist developed meals and snacks and shipyard medical staff administered immunizations. Hymes collaborated with former Teachers College Professor Lois Meek Stolz to lead the Centers and much of his future philosophy sprung from his Kaiser experience. After the war, Hymes worked with Caroline Zachry and Lawrence Frank at the Caroline Zachry Institute of Human Development in New York City. Hymes' work was to develop a means of sensitizing teachers to the emotional needs of children entering schools.

Hymes wrote *A Pound of Prevention* and not only used the pamphlet for his doctoral dissertation but also founded with it the simplistic writing style that became his hallmark. Hymes continued to write prolifically over the years, producing *How to Tell Your Child About Sex* (1949), *Being a Good Parent* (1949), *Teacher Listen, the Children Speak* (1949), *Understanding Your Child* (1952), *Effective Home-School Relations* (1953), *Behavior and Misbehavior* (1955), and *A Child Development Point of View* (1955).

Hymes held several organizational posts, serving as Vice-President representing Nursery Schools for the Association for Childhood Education (now the **Association for Childhood Education International** [ACEI]) from 1949 to 1951 and working to establish the Southern Association for Children Under Six (now the **Southern Early Childhood Association** [SECA]). He served as the President of the National Association for Nursery Education (now the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** [NAEYC]) from 1945 to 1947 and buoyed the association at its nadir, the postwar years. Beginning in 1946, Hymes held three different university posts as Professor of Early Childhood Education: New Paltz State Teachers College (1946-1949), George Peabody College for Teachers (1949-1957), and the University of Maryland (1957-1970). Students noted Hymes for his informal yet challenging and inviting teaching style. During his time at Maryland, Hymes took a six-month leave to serve on the National Planning Committee for President Johnson's War on Poverty program, **Head Start**. Hymes and D. Keith Osborn were the only two early childhood professionals on the National Planning Committee. Both emphasized educational goals and teacher training for those preparing to teach in Head Start. Through Hymes' persistence, a teacher-to-child ratio of one teacher to fifteen children was additionally secured. Upon his return to the University of Maryland, Hymes became increasingly frustrated with the diminishing emphasis upon children's total development. He retired early, began speaking and writing full-time, and opened Hacienda Press in Carmel, California. His popular works written after 1970 include *Early Childhood Education: Living History Interviews* (1978, 1979) and *Early Childhood Education: Twenty Years in Review* (1991). Hymes died March 6, 1998.

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Charlotte Anderson



IDEA. *See* Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEA Preprimary Project

The IEA Preprimary Project is an unprecedented multinational study of preprimary care and education sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). **High/Scope** Educational Research Foundation served as the international coordinating center, and High/Scope staff, working collaboratively with researchers in seventeen countries, were responsible for sampling, instrument development, data analysis, and the writing of five published reports and one in press. The purpose of the study is to identify how process and structural characteristics of community preprimary settings affect children's language and cognitive development at age 7. The study is unique because many diverse countries participated, using common instruments to measure family background, teachers' characteristics, setting structural characteristics, experiences of children, and children's developmental status.

The study is rooted theoretically in the ecological systems model of human development, which views children's behavior and developmental status as being influenced by multiple levels of the environment, some direct and proximal to the child, such as the child's actual experiences in an education or care setting, and some indirect and distal, such as national policy. The study findings focus on the influence of young children's experiences in community preprimary education and care settings on their language and cognitive development at age 7, controlling for family and cultural influences. Both proximal and distal variables are examined within that context.

The target population consisted of children in selected community settings who were approximately 4½ years old. Data for the longitudinal project were collected in early childhood care and education settings in ten countries: Finland, Greece, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Thailand, and the United States. Each country's research team chose to sample settings that were used by large numbers of families in the community or important for public policy reasons. With expert assistance, each country's research team developed

a sampling plan, using probability proportional to size to select settings and systematic sampling procedures to select four children within each classroom. The age-4 sample included over 5,000 children in more than 1,800 settings in 15 countries. Ten of the initial fifteen countries followed the children to age 7 to collect language and cognitive outcome measures. The median retention rate across countries was 86 percent, ranging from 41 percent to 99 percent. The number of children included in the longitudinal analyses varied from 1,300 to 1,897, depending on the particular analysis.

Working with High/Scope researchers, measures used in the study were developed collaboratively by members of the international team. At age 4, data were collected with three observation systems and three questionnaire/interviews. Children's cognitive and language developmental status was measured at age 4 and age 7. The observation systems collected time-sampled information about how teachers schedule and manage children's time, what children actually do with their time, and the behaviors teachers use and the nature of their involvement with children.

Interviews were conducted to collect family background information and gather information regarding teachers' and parents' expectations about what is important for preschool-aged children to learn. A questionnaire that focused on the structural characteristics of the settings was administered to teachers and caregivers.

The children were followed until age 7, an age across countries when they had all entered primary school. At that time, cognitive and language measures developed by an international team were administered to assess developmental status.

Based on the structure of the data, with individual children nested within settings and settings nested within countries, a hierarchical linear modeling approach was used for the analysis. Accurate estimation of impacts for variables at different levels was especially important for this study because effects at two levels—settings and countries—were often confounded with one another. Although the relationship between setting variables and children's later development was of primary interest, any such findings would have been hard to interpret if country effects had not been accurately estimated and adjusted for. A 3-level approach enabled decomposition of variation of child outcomes into three parts—variation among children within settings, among settings within countries, and among countries. As a result, relationships between care setting variables and children's outcome scores are free of substantial influence from country-level effects.

To date, the project has produced a series of reports on parent beliefs, characteristics of early childhood settings, and how these characteristics relate to children's cognitive and language performance at ages 4 and 7. Among its findings are the following:

- The world over, mothers spend 8 to 12 hours a day with their 4-year-olds, while fathers spend only 6 to 54 minutes.
- In almost all types of group settings around the world, adults interacting with children use adult-centered teaching strategies more often than child-centered strategies.
- Children's language performance at age 7 improves as the predominant types of children's activities that teachers propose are free (which teachers let children

choose) rather than personal/social (personal care, group social activities, discipline). From greatest to least contribution, activity types were as follows: free, physical/expressive, preacademic, and personal/social.

- Children's language performance at age 7 improves as teachers' years of full-time schooling increase.
- Children's cognitive performance at age 7 improves as they spend less time in whole group activities (the teacher proposes the same activity for all the children in the class—songs, games, listening to a story, working on a craft, or a preacademic activity).
- Children's language performance at age 7 improves as the number and variety of equipment and materials available to children in preschool settings increase.

These findings show that teaching practices matter; how teachers set up their classrooms and the activities they propose for children make a difference. Across diverse countries, child-initiated activities and teachers' education appear to contribute to children's later language performance; and minimization of whole group activities and a greater number and variety of materials in preschool settings appear to contribute to their later cognitive performance. Although more research is necessary to establish a pattern of cause and effect and explore the learning mechanisms involved, those in the early childhood field can use these findings to examine local policies and practices and consider if changes are advisable.

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Lawrence J. Schweinbart

IEP. *See* Individualized Education Plan

IFSP. *See* Individualized Family Service Plan

IJEC. *See* *International Journal of Early Childhood*

IKU. *See* International Kindergarten Union

Immigration

Immigrant children make up the fastest growing sector of the U.S. child population and represent about 20 percent of all children in the United States. Some immigrants plan to stay for a lifetime, others hope to return to the home nation when economic or political change occurs, and still others will decide to move again because of upward mobility in the business world.

The United States and some other nations favor the term *immigration* for the act of people entering from other nations to settle and use *immigrants* as a term for the people. The term *migrants* is reserved for those who move about within the national borders. European nations usually refer to new arrivals from other nations as *migrants*. Canadian terms for immigrants include *newcomers*, a general term used for all new arrivals from other nations. *Transnational migration* is an increasingly recognized international term for those who move from one nation to another.

The semantics used to describe the phenomenon are not as important as the recognition of the enormity of the global phenomenon of movement from one nation to another and the impact on societies, communities, and schools. The transnational displacement of peoples is endemic, with some 12 million people worldwide seeking to move from their home country to a different country each year.

The thrust behind the movement of people from one nation to another can be for such reasons as seeking a better way of life, joining family, or for a work assignment. Unfortunately much of the movement of families and individuals is not by choice. Refugees leave their home country because of well-founded fears that they will be persecuted due to their religious beliefs, political opinion, or membership in a given group, or because they are affected by civil war or armed conflict.

Today's transnational migrants are from many different countries and varied socioeconomic backgrounds. While immigrant families are more likely to have limited skills and income, an increasing number of those who move from one nation to another are highly skilled and well-educated workers, managers, and entrepreneurs (Fix and Passel, 2003). The trend toward global movement among the skilled workers, while it represents a small percentage of the overall numbers engaged in transnational migration, illustrates one aspect of global change, and the individuals may consider themselves to be global citizens, comfortable almost anywhere (Friedman, 2002). Even for those who have firmly planted themselves in the new host community, communication with friends and family in the sending nation may remain strong, partly because today's technology offers swift communication across boundaries and distances. However, children of such families may have no clear concept of their familial or societal culture, identifying instead with two or more unlike cultures, but not sensing a personal identity with either one.

Although four-fifths of children living in immigrant families are U.S.-born citizens, their childhoods are shaped by their parents' experiences as immigrants. Of the California children from birth through eleven years of age who live in immigrant families, 45 percent have parents who speak no English or do not speak it well (Children Now, 2004). While children in immigrant families are more likely to be poor and live in crowded housing, research shows that life is difficult for all immigrant children (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001). School may be fragmented for immigrant children, with time lost for moving, getting settled, and getting documents or whatever is necessary to enroll the child. Immigrant children's preparation for life and schooling in the new host nation varies widely. Those who have come from societies where early education is valued, and whose parents have invested time and effort into helping the child with the transition, may enter with excellent preparation and support. Others may have little or no

firm preparation for dealing with the many stressors of relocation, lacking any prior schooling or experiences outside of the family.

Two frequent problems are that the child, regardless of socioeconomic status of the parents, lacks facility with the language of the school and, because of that lack of language, is confronted with the inability to forge new peer relationships. The multiple losses the children and their families experience from the move, the fears, confusion, sadness, loneliness, and alienation they feel, are carried with the children to their new schools (Kirova-Petrova, 2000).

Debates over the education of immigrant children include issues associated with language, training teachers to address the specific needs of immigrant children, developing instructional materials, and developing assessment instruments in language other than English. The prevailing impression is that immigrant children, regardless of their country of origin, do not adjust well to school and perform poorly academically, draining resources from an already overburdened educational system. However, there is evidence that in spite of often difficult circumstances some immigrant and refugee children perform at least as well academically and may stay in school longer than their U.S.-born native English speaking peers of similar class backgrounds. They may even exceed the native peers' academic norms (Board NRC/IOM, 1995).

Although there are agencies committed to assisting new immigrants and supporting families in beginning their life in their new country, the school or child-care setting serves as the central resource for these families. In addition to educating children, child-care programs and schools today also attend to children's health and mental health needs and to the needs of their parents by providing or identifying various forms of assistance essential for people who are learning a new language, culture, and customs. Some of the problems faced in this process are related to cultural barriers to parental involvement, including linguistic and academic issues as well as practical concerns concerning parents' work schedules, child care and fear of detection. Teachers are sometimes resistant to involving newly arrived parents because of all those challenges. Overcoming the challenges calls for child-care and school settings, and the host communities at large to be accepting and supportive of newly arrived families. Creating innovative ways to work with families may include meeting parents at their workplace, developing family resource centers, hosting classes, activities, and workshops within the school, and building a network of relationships with local businesses and community-based organizations. The strong commitment on the part of the teachers, administrative, and support school personnel is needed to help immigrant children regain a sense of mastery and pride. Strategies implemented may include having the new arrivals teach other students their own language or about their home nation and involving children in a variety of activities that do not require language as the sole means of communication (Yale, 2003).

Roughly one in six children in the United States lives in an immigrant-headed household, and the languages spoken in those households are as varied as the cultures represented. Transnational migration adds to the nation's diversity and complexity and to its hopes and directions of the future. Immigrants are a vital source of human capital that expands and strengthens the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the host society. In respect to early childhood education, meeting the complex and diverse needs of immigrant children challenges educators

to examine their own policies and practices and to pursue culturally competent pedagogy. Providing an on-going and effective support to promote academic success and well-being of all children reflects teachers and administrators' abilities to respond optimally to all children, understanding both the richness and the limitations reflected by their own sociocultural context, as well as the sociocultural contexts of the children.

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Leab Adams and Anna Kirova

Incarcerated Parents, Children of

The Problem

Because of the large numbers of Americans arrested for drugs in recent years and many draconian plans for imprisonment ("three strikes" laws, to mention but one), the numbers of children impacted by their parent's incarceration has skyrocketed. 1,500,000 children in the United States had a parent in prison in 1999, up by more than 500,000 since 1991. By 2004, there were 2.3 million (Mumola, 2000). The needs of these children regularly go unmet, and they are in our classrooms, family child-care homes, and after school programs.

In 1999, 2.1 percent of American children had one or two parents in prison. This number has increased substantially by publication, probably to above 4 percent and, for children of color, into double digits. Black children were at 7 percent in 1999, nearly 9 times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children (0.8 percent) or Latino children (2.6 percent, 3 times as likely as white children to have an inmate parent). More than 22 percent of children with a parent in prison were under five years of age. And about half of the inmate parents were living with their child(ren) at the time of arrest (Mumola, 2000).

Early educators will likely meet these children in the course of their work. Since having a parent in prison is an enormously stressful experience, one that usually impacts a child for the rest of his or her life, adults who are with the child have the

opportunity to help the child develop resilience. Children in families impacted by imprisonment suffer emotional stress, social isolation, difficulties in school, mood changes, regression, and health problems (notably asthma). Boys tend to explode, becoming anxious and aggressive, and girls to implode, becoming silent, anxious, withdrawn, and depressed. The arts can help them to mediate their pain. Offering open-ended art activities and dance and movement, giving children time to express what is inside them, can be a major support to children who are carrying any heavy burden.

After the arrest of a mother, children are most often sent to live with relatives, and sometimes into foster care. If the father is arrested, children generally stay with their mother. These new homes are usually far from the prison, making visiting rare. Regular visiting almost never happens, threatening the relationship between the parent and child. Prisoners from Hawaii are now often incarcerated on the mainland, meaning that visits are generally out of question. Our society has not been making provision for minimizing the upheaval in the lives of children whose parents are removed. And the huge increase (more than 100% since 1996) of women in prison has meant a doubling of the number of children with a parent in prison, and much more use of the foster care system to see to the needs of these children.

What Is Needed?

According to the *Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents*, children with parents in prison have eight rights that should be written into the laws and social practices of our communities. These rights are as follow:

1. To be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.
2. To be heard when decisions are made about me.
3. To be considered when decisions are made about my parent.
4. To be well cared for in my parent's absence.
5. To speak with, see, and touch my parent.
6. To support, as I struggle with my parent's incarceration.
7. Not to be judged, blamed or labeled because of my parent's incarceration.
8. To have a lifelong relationship with my parent.

The early childhood teacher can help children of incarcerated parents in the following two ways:

1. Working to change social policy so that children's outcomes are part of what is considered in arrest, trial and sentencing of parents (political help).
2. Making many connections with the child and offering to talk about the problems (direct help).

Political Help for Children

Early childhood educators are shocked by society's neglect of children under so many and varied stresses can become active in their public policy organizations,

working to implement the *Bill of Rights* and also working on alternatives to locking up mothers and fathers in prison. Many of these parents would be able to care for their children from home if they were sentenced to do their time there, and their children would be the ones who would benefit most from this change.

There is almost no public outcry on behalf of these children, and public information programs are essential. If small-model programs such as the one begun in 2004 at the office of San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Adachi were brought to the attention of policymakers, more attempts to serve this community must come into existence. Keeping these (and all) children safe, comfortable and whole must become a national priority. Young school-aged children of prisoners often fear disclosing their story to others because of the shame and difference that attach to their status. They may surround themselves with an aura of secrecy.

Direct Help for Children in Educator's Care

It is important for early childhood educators to help these children feel valued and let them know that having a parent in prison isn't what defines them. If a child feels there is someone who is interested and nonjudgmental, who will listen and talk about the difficulties s/he is facing, that will help.

An adult can say to the child: "It must be hard to have your daddy (mommy) in jail." And then continue the discussion if the child wishes. If the child doesn't have anything to say at that time, it's a good idea to repeat the remark in a few weeks. It lets the child know that she or he isn't being judged and excluded, but only offered help or comfort.

Early childhood educators can be sensitive to the fact that children have different families, and approach holiday gift making or Mother's or Father's Day with language that includes this child. "Mother's Day is coming and you may want to make cards for your mom or your grandmother or your foster mother or any other woman you love very much." Or, "Here are materials to make something for your grownups."

The adult who has assumed care for the child may be angry at the incarcerated parent for leaving the parenting to be done by others, or for the crime itself. It is important that the child shouldn't find himself or herself in the midst of such anger between parent and caregiver. Sometimes the early childhood provider can help find counseling or other support systems for the caregiver, or can listen and point out what the child needs in this situation . . . a sense of being valued and protected, and a continuing connection with all the people important to him or her. Small services can make a difference in the tension levels of these families—someone to shop for groceries or take the child to visit in prison.

The teacher might have discussions with the whole group of children about *people we miss*. Children with parents in prison will be interested to hear of others missing people who have died, moved away, gone off to work in a far-off place, are in rehabilitation programs or are in the armed forces. There is a companionship among those with loved ones who aren't close by.

The teacher can invite children to draw or paint people they miss. This work should be supported and given a place of honor in the classroom. The teacher

can invite the children to make a play about people they miss. Such activities benefit all children, and don't point a finger at the child with a parent in prison, but include him/her in the human story.

The teacher will also want to read and discuss books on this subject. While there are many titles, some may too wordy or too judgmental for young children. A few good ones are the following:

- Maury, Inez (1978). *My mother and I are getting stronger*. In English and Spanish. Volcano Press, P.O. Box 270, Volcano, CA 95689. Available online at <http://www.volcanopress.com/cbindex.shtml>.
- Woodson, Jacqueline (2002). *Our Gracie Aunt*. Hyperion. Two African American children react differently to their change in circumstances. Also by the same author is the book *Visiting Day*.
- Williams, Vera B. (2001). *Amber was brave, Essie was smart*. New York: Greenwillow. This book offers poetry and drawings about two sisters who react very differently to their father being in prison. The significance of the two children having different reactions is that conversations with children can begin, "would you feel like Amber or like Essie?" and that's a good start for exploring what children might feel. If you have a child or children with parents in prison, *don't require that the child come forth with his or her opinions*; let the others do the work and let the child with the real situation listen to the concern and sympathy that these books evoke for the children in them.

Starting in 2004 the 125,000-member **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** formed an Interest Group for Children with Incarcerated Parents (CHIPS), which meets annually at the NAEYC conference. Up-to-date information can be obtained from that Interest Group by telephoning the NAEYC headquarters at 800-424-2460 and asking for contact numbers or calling cochair Sydney Clemens at 415-586-7338.

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Sydney Gurewitz Clemens

Inclusion

In 1975, Congress passed a law, the Education for All Handicapped Act (now the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]**), which specified that children with disabilities were entitled to a free and appropriate education in the least

restrictive environment. This law ended the isolation of students with disabilities who were denied access to public schools or attended isolated settings. This meant that students with disabilities were to be educated in the general education classroom.

Through the 1970s, the term *mainstreaming* was used to describe the placement of children in classrooms with typically developing children. This meant that students with disabilities who were placed in special classes should be exposed to the general education classroom for at least part of the day. For instance, they could participate in art and music with their typically developing peers. Advocates for children with disabilities set the goal that exposure to and engagement with typically developing peers for at least part of the day be interpreted as a positive educational experience for *all* children, not just those with disabilities. As concerns grew about the need to be more mindful of environmental and curriculum decisions as they might better support the learning of all children, the term *integration* began to replace the term and concept of mainstreaming. Although attitudes were changing about children with disabilities, sometimes there was an expectation that children with disabilities needed to demonstrate their abilities and skills, thereby convincing others that they could earn the right to be in the general education classroom at least some of the time.

During the 1980s, “inclusion” became the term used to describe the education of children with disabilities in the general education classroom. Along with this change in vocabulary was a significant change in attitude regarding children’s rights and teachers’ responsibilities. Although students could receive some instruction in other settings, their education would be the responsibility of the general education teacher. One of the major differences between contemporary practices and those associated with mainstreaming is that the general education classroom is now considered the placement for the student with disabilities. In other words, students with special needs are not assigned to a special education classroom; rather, their placement home is the general education classroom.

The term “full inclusion” (also known as the Regular Education Initiative of the 1980s) is used to refer to the practice of serving students with disabilities entirely within the general education classroom. Special educators and other specialists may provide services, but the child would be present in the general education classroom at all times. During this period there were also proponents of the concept of a continuum of services by those who believed that full inclusion would unnecessarily cause some services and special education classes to be eliminated. Such a constriction of special education programs would, they feared, limit options for parents who might wish to choose some placement other than an inclusive setting.

Stainback and Stainback (1994) articulate a number of goals for inclusive schools. Chief among them is that they “. . . meet unique educational, curricular, and instructional needs of all students within the general education classes.” In addition, IDEA now asks that **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** teams explain clearly the reasons why a child should not be placed in the regular education classroom, thus, favoring the notion of inclusion.

Inclusive schools emphasize valuing each community member, equitable community participation, a sense of belonging for all children. A strengths/needs

approach to education is taken as opposed to a deficit orientation. This approach represents more than mere compliance with the law. It can mean improved education for all children. These principles are reflected in the endorsement of a position statement by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** and the **Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children**. Tensions remain around issues of placement, finance, and social inclusion.

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Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) represents specially designed instruction and related services that meet the unique needs of a student. When a child who is eligible for special education services reaches the age of 3 years, those services are provided under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. The IEP is the central jointly constructed document that provides for the implementation of the special education laws in the United States. It is considered a legally binding document for all signatories (parents and representatives of the local education agency) under the provisions of IDEA.

The concept of an IEP was first stipulated nationally in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142, which became IDEA in 1990). The IEP is one of the key provisions of the law; it guarantees a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Parents or professionals (e.g., nurse, teachers, pediatricians) may make the referral to special education. The eligibility determination is made by a thorough nondiscriminatory evaluation that requires prior written parental consent. Parent input and teacher observation are desirable parts of the evaluation. All evaluation information is confidential and should be seen only by people who are directly involved. The evaluation process must be completed in a timely fashion (within thirty school days of the parent's written permission), and forms the basis for the development of the IEP.

The IEP sets out the unique strengths and needs of the student as well as the current levels of performance. The needs become the basis for student goals. The IEP allows for parents to include their concerns and vision for the child.

After evaluation and the determination of eligibility for services, the child's team is responsible for developing the IEP. IDEA specifies that parents must always be members of any team that makes decisions about their child. The child's teacher is also a vital member of the team. A member of the local education agency (LEA) who is knowledgeable about the agency's resources and general education program must also be a member of the team. The IEP must spell out the service provider, the frequency and duration of services, as well as the place where the services will be delivered. An IEP must be reviewed and rewritten each year, and students are reevaluated every three years.

The team participates in the determination about how the student will participate in any mandated-testing program. Once the IEP is signed by all parties, parents are provided a copy and services can be delivered. If the parents refuse to sign the IEP, the state appeals process is set in motion.

Parents are guaranteed due process that provides procedural safeguards for students with disabilities. These timelines are associated with referral, evaluation, the development of the IEP, the signing of the IEP, and student placement. When parents and school systems disagree, there is an appeals process that can be accessed by either party.

Funding has been and continues to be controversial. Many refer to IDEA as an unfunded mandate. Meeting the testing requirements under the **No Child Left Behind Act** is also a source of difficulty. Minority and ESL students continue to be overrepresented in the special education population. *See also* Individualized Family Service Plan.

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Betty N. Allen

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a written document that provides the foundation for intervention for children with disabilities or at risk for having a substantial delay, aged birth through three years, and their families. The IFSP should be a broad portrait of what is desirable for the child and family. It should specify all the services that are needed by the family and the child and who will provide the service.

The authorization for the IFSP is through the **Individuals with Disabilities Act** (IDEA), formally the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). PL 94-142, the EHA, passed in 1975 by the U.S. Congress, was amended in 1983 through PL 98-199 to provide financial incentives to states to expand services for children from birth to three years and their families. Eleven years after the original EHA, Part H of PL 99-457 (1986), also known as the Early Intervention Amendments to

PL 94-142, supported services to all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with a disability or at risk of having a substantial delay and required the development of an IFSP for each child/family served. In 1990, the EHA laws under PL 101-476 were renamed IDEA. The term “handicapped” was replaced with “disabled” and services were expanded. Part H, which addresses **early intervention** services, became Part C under IDEA. Part C describes the most current required components of the IFSP.

Children and families are identified through a mandated child find system, which is the responsibility of each state’s designated lead agency for Early Intervention (EI) services. Primary referral sources are hospitals, including prenatal and postnatal facilities; physicians; parents; child-care programs; local education agencies; public health facilities, other social service agencies; and other health care providers.

Each state has an EI program, which is responsible for delivering IFSP services. EI eligibility is determined through a timely, comprehensive evaluation of the needs of the child and family and the current level of functioning. If found eligible, the IFSP is developed by a transdisciplinary team including the family, EI providers, other specialists, and individuals invited by the family. The IFSP includes specific components such as initial and periodic multidisciplinary assessments, a description of the strengths of the child and family, a statement of the current level of performance, measurable child and family goals, articulation of the frequency, duration, and method of service delivery, and a description of appropriate transition services when a child leaves EI or the IFSP is terminated. While there are similarities to an IEP, the plan for educational services for children aged 3–21 years, a major difference is that the IFSP is family centered and includes information and goals about the family as well as the child. Additionally, the IFSP names a service coordinator, includes a statement describing the natural environments (playgrounds, child care, library) in which early intervention services will be received, and includes activities undertaken with multiple agencies. The IFSP is intended to be a dynamic, flexible document that must be revised periodically and is supportive to families and envisions children in the natural inclusion environments within their communities.

Challenges in providing IFSPs include identifying children and families in need of services, insuring adequate funding to support the children who have identified disabilities as well as children at risk, providing services in natural settings, scheduling home visits or service delivery, intensity of services, program models, recruiting qualified staff, insuring that children’s strengths as well as their needs are addressed, writing objectives in easily understood jargon-free language, insuring family needs are included in the IFSP, including technology needs, and transitioning children and families from an IFSP to an **individualized education plan** (IEP).

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Congress enacted the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975 to govern the education of children with disabilities. In the years that followed, IDEA was amended a number of times, including the 2004 revisions through P.L. 108-446, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Over the years since it first enacted IDEA in 1975, Congress has expanded the group of students who have a right to special education beyond the first group of students, ages 6 to 18, to include infants and toddlers, young children ages 3 through 5, and older students ages 6 through 21.

Because the needs of and services provided to infants and toddlers are so different from the needs and services for older students, IDEA is divided into two parts. Part B of IDEA contains the requirements for providing special education and related services to children with disabilities from 3 through 21 years of age. Part C authorizes grants to states to develop and maintain **early intervention** programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth to three years) and their families. Part C, the infants and toddlers program, has parallels with the provisions and requirements of Part B; however, these provisions and requirements differ in a number of important respects. For example, while Part B eligibility is based on categories of disabilities, eligibility for Part C programs are often based on a diagnosis of “**developmental delay**” that requires early intervention services. Instead of an **individualized education plan** (IEP), Part C programs have **individualized family service plans** (IFSP) in recognition that services must be provided to the family as well as to the infant or toddler. Since very young children are served in a variety of locations (including the home), Part C services are to be provided in “**natural environments**” which are the types of settings in which infants and toddlers without disabilities would participate. IDEA 2004 now gives states the option to develop a joint system that would permit parents of children receiving Part C early intervention services and are eligible for preschool services to continue in Part C until they are eligible to enter kindergarten.

This law started into motion a movement that even today continues to impact the lives of children with disabilities and their families. This legislation was designed to ensure that all children with disabilities receive an appropriate education through special education and related services. This law established six major components that have a direct effect on children with disabilities: (1) Right to free and appropriate public education, (2) Nondiscriminatory evaluation,

(3) Procedural due process, (4) Individualized education program, (5) Least restrictive environment, and (6) Parental participation.

All children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities. That is, parents or family members cannot be asked to pay for any special education services. With this law, children with disabilities have a right to attend a local school as well as receive services that support their education in general education classes or most natural settings. To accomplish this, each state has in place what is called a child find system, a set of procedures for alerting the public that services are available for children with disabilities and for distributing print materials, conducting screening, and completing other activities to ensure that children are identified. The child find procedures include children with disabilities attending private and religious schools and highly mobile children with disabilities (such as migrant and homeless children) regardless of the severity of their disability.

Nondiscriminatory evaluation attempts to eliminate discrimination in the classification and placement of children suspected to have disabilities. The fundamental intent is to eliminate discrimination based on cultural background, race, or disability. The law requires that children be evaluated by trained professionals who must administer validated tests in the child's first language or other mode of communication (Braille, sign language). The evaluation must not consist of only a single general intelligence test but must be tailored to assess specific areas (language, cognitive, motor, etc.) of education. Professionals cannot use a single procedure as the sole criterion for determining a special educational program for a child. Most important, a multidisciplinary team (team of professionals from various specialties) must assess the child in all areas related to the suspected disability.

Procedural due process guarantees safeguards to children with disabilities and their parents. IDEA ensures that any decisions made concerning children with disabilities are done so with parent input and in compliance with clear procedures. Parents must give written consent for their children to be assessed to determine if they have a disability. Similarly, parents must be invited to attend any meetings regarding their child, and they must give written permission for the child to receive special education. Further, written notice must be made prior to any change in placement. All records are confidential, and if parents do not agree with any evaluation or special education placement, they have the legal right to go to court. If disagreements occur between parents and school professionals related to placement or any other part of special education, mediation is an informal strategy that must be offered to parents to try to resolve the disagreement. If mediation is not successful, a due process hearing occurs.

The key to appropriate special education is individualization. IDEA requires that an IEP or an IFSP be developed for each child with special educational needs. The plan for students ages 3 through 21 is called an IEP. IEPs are intended to serve as planning guides for students with special needs, not as mere paperwork. IFSPs are created for infants and toddlers and their families when eligibility for early intervention is established. This requirement underscores the significant role of the families.

The least restrictive environment (LRE) clause refers to the physical placement of the student. The LRE is the setting most like that of nondisabled children that also meets each child's educational needs. It is now presumed that the general education setting is the LRE for the majority of children with disabilities, and educators must justify any instance in which a child with a disability is not educated there. Young children with disabilities receive special education and related services in a variety of school and community sites. The team developing the child's IEP or the IFSP determines the appropriate placement based upon the child's needs. However, a full continuum of educational services must be available for children with disabilities. This continuum of services ranges from the general education classroom to a special day school or residential facility.

The IDEA is a remarkable law filled with very specific prescriptions (dictates) and proscriptions (prohibitions). The IDEA envisions specific roles for the federal, state, and local levels of government, as well as for parents. The most important roles, however, are reserved for parents and local government. IDEA explicitly calls for the active involvement of parents in all aspects of educational programming for their children with disabilities. When the provisions of IDEA are fully implemented, both letter of the law and the spirit of the law are protected. When this is the case, there is a supportive and mutually respectful relationship between families and professionals from the start. *See also* Disabilities, Young Children with.

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Sharon Judge

Infant Care

Infant care generally refers to the nonparental care of children during the time period from just after birth to thirty-six months of age. Infant care options include care provided inside the child's home by a family member, friend, or child-care provider; and care outside the home provided by a family member, friend, family care provider, or center-based child-care provider. A good percentage of the world's infant care is unlicensed and unregulated and dependent upon informal arrangements between families and providers. The licensing of programs and providers varies widely and does not insure quality. Low quality is consistently linked with low salary, few benefits, little status, minimal training, and high adult to child ratios. When these factors are present, turnover in the field is high.

When the care they received is left unregulated or unplanned, started too early, provided by untrained caregivers or done in groups too large, or in environments unhealthy or unsafe, babies are put at developmental risk. Unfortunately, at least

in the United States, this is most often the type of care provided. A recent study of infant care in the United States found that only 8 percent of infant-toddler care was judged as developmentally appropriate and 40 percent was judged as harmful (Cost Quality and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995). This study was done in licensed centers.

Only sixty years ago most industrialized nations, including the United States, had similar visions with regard to the care of infants. Babies were cared for in the home of the parent or other family members and the family was responsible for the quality of care the child received. In the United States in 1940, 67 percent of all married couples had a wage-earning dad and a stay-at-home mom and this family-based system of care seemed to work (Oser and Cohen, 2003). But in the 1970s and 1980s family work and child-rearing patterns changed dramatically. Twenty four percent of mothers with children under one year were in the workforce in 1970, and by 1984 forty seven percent worked outside the home (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1994). Most industrialized societies saw these risks as unacceptable and stepped in to protect infants and toddlers with paid parental leave during early infancy, liberal sick leave policies to care for sick children, and regulated and partially subsidized child-care services provided by trained workers. Few of these social adaptations happened in the United States, however, or in much of the nonindustrialized world.

Although much of the nonparental infant care provided throughout the world is of questionable quality, leaders in the field of early childhood education have identified conditions of high-quality care, including the acknowledgement that good infant-toddler care is not babysitting and not preschool. It is a special kind of care that looks like no other. For it to be designed well and carried out appropriately, all features—including lesson plans, environments, routines, staffing, group size, and relationships with families, supervision, and training—must have an infant care orientation. Because infants and toddlers have unique needs, their care must be constructed specifically to meet those needs.

Unfortunately, there is wide variation in how infant needs are interpreted. In the United States, for example, infant care has developed in two extreme directions. One orientation is guided by the conviction that all that infants and toddlers need are safe environments and tender loving care and that intellectual activity is unnecessary. Another interpretation of infant development and the role of infant-care argues that infants need to be intellectually stimulated by adult-directed and developmentally appropriate activities for them to grow cognitively. In many other nations infant learning is interpreted differently. In government-sponsored programs in Italy and Germany, for example, caregivers study the children in their care and keep detailed records of their interests and skills in order to find ways to facilitate the child's learning. They are trained to search for ways to use the children's natural interests and curiosity to develop appropriate curriculum activities and environments. In these settings, a good portion of what might be called lesson planning for infants and toddlers involves caregivers seeking to understand each child's development and how to relate to it. Observation, **documentation**, analysis, and adaptation happen daily. What results is a program approach that combines loving relationship-based care as the essential prerequisite of intellectual development; attention to the child's interests, curiosity, and motivation as the beginning point

for curriculum planning; and adults who play the role of facilitator of the child's learning.

In the United States, program policies that reflect child-focused infant care can be found in the **Head Start** Program Performance Standards and are being used as the base for **Early Head Start** operation. These policies, described in the Program for Infant-Toddler Caregivers literature, are being endorsed widely as foundational policies for quality infant care (Lally et al., 1995); and are outlined below.

Primary care

In a primary care system each child is assigned to one special caregiver who is principally responsible for that child's care. When children spend a longer day in care than their primary caregiver, a second caregiver is assigned to also have a primary relationship with the child. Primary care works best when caregivers team up and support each other and provide a back-up base for security for each other's children in primary care. Primary care does not mean exclusive care. It means, however, that all parties know who has primary responsibility for each child.

Small groups

Every major research study on infant and toddler care in the United States has shown that a small group size *and* good ratios are key components of good-quality care (Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Kagan and Cohen, 1996). The Program for Infant-Toddler Caregivers in California recommends primary care ratios of 1:3 or 1:4 in groups of 6-12 children, depending on their age (Lally, 1992; WestEd, 2000). The guiding principle is: *The younger the child, the smaller the group*. Small groups facilitate the provision of personalized care that infants and toddlers need, supporting peaceful exchanges, freedom and safety to move and explore, and the development of intimate relationships.

Continuity

Continuity of care is the third key to providing the deep connections that infants and toddlers need for good-quality child care. Programs that incorporate the concept of continuity of care keep primary caregivers and children together throughout the three years of infant-toddler period or for the entire time during that period of the child's enrollment in care.

Individualized care

Individualized care is interpreted as following children's unique rhythms and styles, and is believed to promote well-being and a healthy sense of self. This principle discourages the use of embarrassment if a child's biological rhythms or needs are different from those of other children. Responding promptly to

children's individual needs is assumed to support their growing ability to self-regulate, that is, to function competently in personal and social contexts. An individualized infant-care program adapts to the child, rather than vice versa, and the child receives the message that he or she is important; that her or his needs will be met; and that choices, preferences, and impulses are respected.

Cultural continuity

Children develop a sense of who they are and what is important within the context of the family and the larger cultural context. Traditionally, the child's family and cultural community have been responsible for the transmission of values, expectations, and ways of doing things, especially during the early years of life. As more children enter child care during the years of infancy, questions are raised about their cultural identity and sense of belonging. Consistency of care between home and child care, always important for the very young, becomes even more so when the infant or toddler is cared for in the context of cultural practices that vary from those of the child's family. Because of the important role of culture in development, caregivers who serve families from diverse backgrounds need to (a) heighten their understanding of the importance of culture in the lives of infants, (b) develop cultural competencies, (c) acknowledge and respect cultural differences, and (e) learn to be open, responsive to, and willing to negotiate with families about child-rearing practices. In this way, families and caregivers, working together, can facilitate the optimal development of each child.

Inclusion of children with special needs

Inclusion means making the benefits of high-quality care available to all infants through appropriate accommodations and supports in order for each child, including those with disabilities, to have full, active program participation. Strategies already embraced above—that is, a relationship-based approach to the provision of care that is responsive to the individual child's cues and desires to learn—are as important for children with disabilities or other special needs as for children without these challenges.

For further information see the Program for Infant-Toddler Care Web site at www.pitc.org. See also Culture; Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s); Disabilities, Young Children with; Families; Teacher Certification/Licensure.

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J. Ronald Lally

Intelligence

What is intelligence? Laypeople generally include practical problem solving, verbal behavior, and social competence in their definitions. Psychologists, however, do not agree on how to define the concept of intelligence. While most Western definitions have emphasized cognitive competence, many traditional societies have emphasized social competence. There is widespread agreement that intelligence is a person's capacity for goal-directed adaptive behavior (Sternberg 1994, p. 1135). Most formal and implicit theories regard language as playing an important role in the definition and measurement of intelligence. Psychologists representing the psychometric approach have defined intelligence as whatever intelligence tests measure. In the 1920s and 1930s, many equated **intelligence quotient (IQ)** with native ability. In the 1950s and 1960s, constructivist theories introduced into the United States portrayed intelligence as being constructed by children through interaction with their physical and social environments. Contemporary psychologists think of intelligence as a variety of attributes influenced by genetic makeup, prenatal environment, postnatal environment, encouragement and opportunities, and cultural beliefs and practices.

The study of intelligence has been controversial since its inception. In his early studies of intelligence, Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) concluded that the major differences among babies were hereditary. On the other hand Alfred Binet (1857-1911), a French psychologist, believed that the capacity to learn could be increased by stimulation. Binet became interested in studying child development following the birth of his two daughters in 1885 and 1887. His observations of his daughters led him to formulate a conception of intelligence. In 1904, the French Ministry of Education asked Binet and his student and collaborator, Theophile Simon, to devise a method to identify children who would benefit from slower-paced instruction in public school classrooms. Binet and Simon's original measure consisted of test items that assessed memory, good judgment, and abstraction and were arranged according to the year at which the majority of children mastered each skill or ability. Binet and Simon's test was so successful at predicting school success that it was adapted for use by other countries. In the United States, compulsory school attendance laws, child labor laws, and large numbers of immigrants had caused the school population to change in the early 1900s. To address the wider range of individual abilities present in school classrooms, Louis Terman (1877-1956) at Stanford University revised Binet and Simon's scale, renaming it the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale in 1916.

Over the last century one of the primary questions about intelligence has been whether it is a unitary or multifaceted construct. In 1927, British psychologist Charles Spearman, using factor analysis, developed the two-factor theory of intelligence, where *g* represented a primary general intelligence (abstract reasoning) and *s* represented specific related abilities. Spearman believed that the general factor was the essential foundation from which the specific related abilities emerged. American psychologist, Louis Thurstone (1938) disagreed with Spearman, advancing his theory of seven unrelated primary mental abilities which he believed operated independently: verbal meaning, perceptual speed, reasoning, number, rote memory, word fluency, and spatial visualization. Extending factor analytic research, Raymond Cattell (1971) described two types of intelligence in addition to a general factor: (1) crystallized intelligence (i.e., accumulated knowledge and skills) which depends on culture and learning opportunities; and (2) fluid intelligence (e.g., the ability to see relationships), which depends on brain function. Recent research has shown that even fluid intelligence test items (spatial and performance tasks) depend on learning opportunities.

In the 1950s and 1960s, J. McVicker Hunt, Benjamin Bloom, Jerome Bruner, and Kenneth Wann, influenced by the interactionist theory of Jean Piaget, amassed evidence on and argued for the influence of early experience on intelligence. They succeeded in focusing attention on the idea that intelligence is a highly complex process, not explained by the simplistic notion of fixed genetic endowment. Hunt, in particular, became a strong advocate for early childhood enrichment programs, which he believed would maximize children's intellectual potential during its period of greatest malleability.

More recently several theories have emerged that portray intelligence as multifaceted. In 1983, Harvard psychologist, Howard Gardner introduced his theory of **multiple intelligences** (MI). Based on his studies of stroke victims, savant syndrome, and lower animals, Gardner originally posited seven distinct domains of intelligence, each of which he believed had separate neural circuitry. He included linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences, later adding naturalistic and existential intelligences. Although Gardner's MI theory has not yet been supported by research evidence, it has been widely embraced by educators, who design curriculum, lesson plans, and classrooms to address multiple intelligences in the children they teach.

In 1985, Yale psychologist Robert Sternberg introduced a triarchic theory of intelligence, which included three subtheories of intelligence: componential, experiential, and contextual. According to this theory, individuals with high *componential* intelligence think analytically and critically and therefore, achieve high scores on standardized tests; persons with high *experiential* intelligence process information more skillfully in novel situations, demonstrating creativity; and persons with high *contextual* intelligence are intelligent in a practical way, adapting to and shaping their environment. Sternberg believes that for most people contextual or practical intelligence may be more important for success in life than are the other two subtheories of intelligence.

Definitions of intelligent behavior vary according to culture. Some researchers have found that European American parents named cognitive abilities as most

important to their conception of an intelligent child, whereas Mexican American parents rated social skills, and Asian parents rated motivation—the drive to do well—as highest in importance. In Brazil, the Flecheiros or Arrow People teach their sons to become deft archers to keep intruders away; a skilled archer is considered an intelligent person. In the United States, a child who is good at academics is considered intelligent. Sternberg addresses the different contexts of intelligent behavior in his triarchic theory.

Poverty severely depresses the intelligence scores of ethnic minority children in the United States. The longer children remain in impoverished environments, the greater the negative effects on their intelligence test scores. Early intervention programs such as **Head Start** were initiated in response to research on the importance of early experiences on children's intellectual and social experiences. Other early intervention programs such as the Carolina **Abecedarian** Project have demonstrated that providing continuous high-quality early childhood experiences for the first five years of life is an effective way to help children avoid the declines in intelligence that come from being reared in impoverished environments.

Although the concept of intelligence is slippery, the study of intelligence is important to the field of Early Childhood Education for a number of reasons. First, the initial five years of life is the period of most rapid human development outside the womb. Early **assessment** allows professionals to identify infants and young children who may be at risk for developmental problems and to design and implement **early intervention** to maximize children's potential while their brains are still plastic. Second, although we know that genetics contributes to intellectual potential, we have learned that the early caregiving environment is a powerful influence on intelligence and academic success. Appropriate early stimulation increases the number of synaptic connections in the cerebral cortex. In other words, early experiences grow the brain. Third, as teachers of young children become aware of the newer theories of intelligence, they can provide experiences to foster all the domains of intelligence. Fourth, the study of intelligence has prompted an appreciation for the diversity of intelligence existing in groups of young children, from those described as slower learners to the very gifted. Such understandings of intelligence have supported critics of a "one size fits all" standardized curriculum that does not meet the needs of young children. Fifth, the ability to reliably measure cognitive abilities has enabled researchers to conduct longitudinal studies of cognitive development. *See also* Intelligence Testing.

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Carol S. Huntsinger

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

The term *intelligence quotient* refers to an estimation of one's cognitive ability or **intelligence**, and is derived by **intelligence testing**. An *intelligence quotient*, or *IQ*, then, is a number estimating an individual's global or overall intellectual or cognitive ability. In the early 1900s, a French psychologist, Alfred **Binet**, first used the term *intelligence* to "refer to the sum total of the higher mental processes" (Wasserman and Tulsky, 2005, p. 7).

With Theodore Simon, Binet completed the first modern-day intelligence test, the Binet-Simon Scale, in 1905; the purpose was to efficiently and accurately evaluate children's intellectual abilities. Specifically, the goal was to identify children with mental retardation who would need special educational programming. Subsequently revised and renamed, the Stanford-Binet was the first major test to yield an intelligence quotient, in which mental age is divided by chronological age. The Stanford-Binet has undergone several revisions, and is currently in its fifth revision, extending downward to age 3 (currently published by Riverside Publishing).

The intelligence quotient or IQ was initially based on calculation of *mental age*, determined by the presumed age level at which certain cognitive tasks are typically accomplished. These early calculations of IQ were based on the following formula (Wasserman and Tulsky, 2005):

Mental age (MA) in months divided by chronological age (CA) in months \times 100

For example, a child aged 6 years (72 months) who performed tasks at the 5-year-old level would earn a mental age of 60 months and an IQ of 83, according to the following the formula:

$$60 \text{ divided by } 72 = .83 \times 100 = 83$$

From this formula, the practice was established—the average IQ was set at 100. Although the formula is no longer used, 100 is still typically used as the average IQ in most formalized intellectual measures.

By the middle of the twentieth century, the Wechsler scales had surpassed the Stanford-Binet in popularity in the United States. David Wechsler, who had some experience with the early U.S. Army Alpha and Beta cognitive tests for selection and placement of soldiers, published the Wechsler-Bellevue Scale in 1939, followed by several other scales, including scales for school-age children, preschoolers, and adults. All Wechsler scales (published by Psychological Corporation) include a combination of verbal (language-based) tasks and performance (visual and visual-motor) tasks that are combined to generate a full-scale IQ (Wasserman and Tulsky, 2005).

IQ Scores

Wechsler's scales were among the first to use the deviation IQ, which provides "rankings of performance relative to individuals of the same age group" (Wasserman and Tulsky, 2005, p. 13). In this way, an individual's performance is

expressed as a standard score that shows how far his or her performance is from the typical performance for other individuals of his/her age. For the Wechsler and most other contemporary IQ tests, the population average score is set to 100 and the standard deviation is set to 15. Thus, a child earning an intelligence quotient of 115 exhibits performance better than average for his/her age. About 68 percent of the population scores within one standard deviation on either side of the mean (85–115). Another 13–14 percent score within an additional standard deviation (70–85 and 115–130). Only 2–3 percent of the population scores more than three standard deviations above or below the mean. Interestingly, many American schools use scores falling at the two standard deviation mark as cutoff scores. That is, the typical cutoff for students to be identified as having mental retardation is 70 or below while the typical cutoff for students to identified as intellectually gifted is 130 or above.

Nature of Intelligence

The field of intelligence testing has been controversial since its inception. Theorists have offered various definitions and certainly the nature of the specific tasks included in a given intelligence test reflect the theoretical orientation of the authors. Most current intelligence tests include measures of the following abilities or skills: abstract reasoning, problem solving, verbal facility, mathematical facility, creativity, processing speed, memory, and the ability to learn and store new information (Sattler, 2001). Intelligence and intelligence testing continue to be the focus of much research. Most recent IQ tests tend to yield global scores or composites, essentially an IQ score, but also yield scores on various abilities, such as those listed above. These scores can yield information about an individual's particular intellectual strengths and weaknesses. Individuals identified with **learning disabilities** tend to have weaknesses in one or more of these areas and strengths in others.

Despite differences in the way various IQ tests assess intelligence, scores on most IQ tests are highly correlated for most people; in fact, IQ scores correlate more highly with other mental measures than do all other types of psychological measures (Sattler, 2001). Thus, an individual who scores well above the average on one IQ test tends to perform similarly on another IQ test. Also, typically IQ is relatively stable over time. That is, measures of one's IQ at an early age tend to be highly correlated with measures later in life. Measures of IQ at ages 5 and older tend to be fairly stable, with research yielding correlations of .50 and higher (Sattler, 2001). Note that correlations between .70 and 1.00 are very large; correlations between .50 and .69 are large (Rosenthal, 2001).

Factors Influencing Development of Intelligence

There is an ongoing debate about how much of intelligence is due to heredity versus how much is subject to environmental influences. People do not inherit IQ. They inherit genes that influence the development of their intelligence; about 50 percent of intelligence is due to heredity (Sattler, 2001). Heredity determines the range of a person's abilities and interacts with environmental factors to determine

a person's intelligence. Studies show that the IQ scores of identical twins (with the same genetic makeup) are more similar than those of fraternal twins (with genetic makeup of brothers/sisters). Studies indicate an increase of about 10–12 IQ points for the identical twin adopted into an enriched environment (Sattler, 2001). Other research indicates considerable change is possible (up to twenty points) in a given child's IQ scores over time. Access to the following can influence development of intelligence: stimulating and enriching experiences, language-rich environment, adult guidance with problem solving, teaching and reinforcing skills and concepts, medical care, nutrition, social support, safety, stability, parental level of education, and infant birth weight. Evidence indicates that intelligence is more malleable in infants and toddlers, when **brain development** is very rapid, providing support for the importance of prevention and intervention services for young children with cognitive impairments or in at-risk environments (Lerner, Lowenthal, and Egan, 2003).

IQ tests have been criticized as being culturally biased. However, attempts to be culturally fair in IQ testing date back to the early twentieth century when the U.S. Army developed the Alpha tests for literate candidates and the Beta tests for nonreaders and candidates who did not have a good command of English (Wasserman and Tulskey, 2005). Nonetheless, some still consider IQ tests to be culturally biased because certain ethnic or racial groups tend to perform less well than other groups. Others argue these differences are likely socioeconomically based. To guard against misidentification of individuals (i.e., incorrect identification as mentally retarded), currently in the United States, IQ test scores alone cannot be used to identify mental retardation; measures of adaptive or functional behavior must also be gathered. Another important criticism of IQ tests is that they may not yield educationally meaningful information. That is, while they provide estimates of a child's cognitive ability compared to same-age peers, they do not give precise information on how best to instruct the child. In other words, these instruments tend to have good diagnostic value but limited treatment utility (Bell and Allen, 2000). IQ tests are most useful for estimating an individual's range of capabilities and whether or not he or she will be able to achieve educational goals expected of same-age peers; the scores tend to correlate significantly with measures of academic achievement (Sattler, 2001). What IQ scores cannot do is give parents or teachers information that would help them to enhance a child's learning or development.

Preschool Assessment

Early childhood measures of IQ tend to be somewhat less reliable than measures used with older children. Uneven and rapid brain development, shortened attention span, limited and idiosyncratic language skills, and unfamiliarity with the testing context all contribute to the lower reliability (Sattler, 2001). For very young children, **assessment** of IQ is challenging; measures of infants tend to assess perceptual and motor skills and to be only weakly correlated with measures taken later in life. Starting at age 12 months, measures tend to be correlated with measures taken later. As might be expected, the measures become more reliable as children get older. The last fifteen years have seen considerable improvement in

the psychometric properties of norm-referenced assessment of cognitive abilities of young children (Ford and Dahinten, 2005). Also noteworthy are the recent development of nonverbal tests of intelligence, such as the Leiter International Performance Scale-Revised (Roid and Miller, 1997, Stoelting) and the Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test (Bracken and McCallum, 1998, Riverside). Developed to assess students with no or limited language skills and/or who do not speak or understand spoken English, these tests are designed to provide fair assessments of cognitive abilities.

Current Practices in IQ Testing

Most IQ tests are individually administered and take an hour or longer to administer. Qualified examiners undergo extensive training, using standardized test procedures. IQ testing is part of most assessment batteries for special education in the United States. In particular, IQ testing may be used in determining if a child meets criteria for mental retardation, intellectual giftedness, learning disabilities, **developmental delay**, and traumatic brain injury. Following passage of U.S. federal special education legislation in 1975 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act [EHA], Public Law 94-142), the field of IQ testing grew dramatically. IQ testing is less common for preschoolers and students in kindergarten than for students in older grades. Nonetheless, IQ testing may be part of a preschool or early primary student's assessment battery. U.S. federal legislation passed in 1986 (Education of the Handicapped Children's Act Amendments, Public Law 99-457) established mandatory **early childhood special education** services for children from ages 3 to 5; in 1991, services were extended to children from ages birth to three (Early Childhood Amendments to the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** [IDEA], Public Law 102-119). IQ tests can provide useful diagnostic information about a child's capabilities and relative areas of cognitive strengths and weaknesses and can also help determine appropriate educational programming. Further, the scores can help determine if the child is exhibiting significant developmental delays and may be used as a baseline measure to gauge progress and effectiveness of intervention programs.

Summary

The intelligence quotient is an estimate of an individual's overall intellectual or cognitive abilities. IQ is typically measured via an individually administered IQ test by a trained examiner. Intelligence tends to be heavily influenced by heredity but environmental factors also influence development of IQ. Recent trends in intelligence testing include development of more accurate preschool measures and measures that are more culturally fair. IQ scores are most appropriately used to yield diagnostic information about an individual child's capabilities relative to peers and, when used in combination with other information about a child, can inform important educational decisions.

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Sherry Mee Bell

Intelligence Testing

The measurement of **intelligence** in children began with the Binet-Simon scale. Because Alfred **Binet** and Theophile Simon viewed intelligence as a holistic phenomenon, their test resulted in one score called the mental age (MA). A child who scored at the level of a six-year-old had a mental age (MA) of 6. In the first version of the Stanford-Binet, Lewis Terman took German psychologist William Stern's suggestion to express the child's performance as an **intelligence quotient** (IQ). It was calculated using the following formula: $IQ = MA/CA \times 100$. A child who was 6-years-old chronologically, but whose score was equivalent to that of an 8-year-old would have an IQ of 133 ($8/6 \times 100 = 133$). The current formula for calculating IQ is more mathematically sophisticated.

The Fifth Edition of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales (SB5) (2003) is an individually administered test suitable for 2 year olds through adults. It includes comprehensive coverage of five factors: fluid reasoning, knowledge, quantitative reasoning, visual-spatial processing, and working memory, and the ability to compare verbal and nonverbal performance. Items range from the very easy to the very difficult. Scores are figured by comparing a child's score to scores of other children the same age. When a child performs at the average for her/his age, her/his IQ is 100. For the youngest children (2–7 years) professionals can use the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales for Early Childhood (Early SB5), which combines a Test Observation Checklist and software-generated Parent Report with the subtests from the SB5.

David Wechsler (1896–1981), a clinical psychologist at Bellevue Hospital in New York, developed the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) for 6- to 16-year-old children in 1949 and the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) for 3- to 8-year-old children in 1967. He was dissatisfied with the single IQ score derived when using the Stanford-Binet. The Wechsler tests, designed for the normal population with IQs from 70 to 130, offer a general

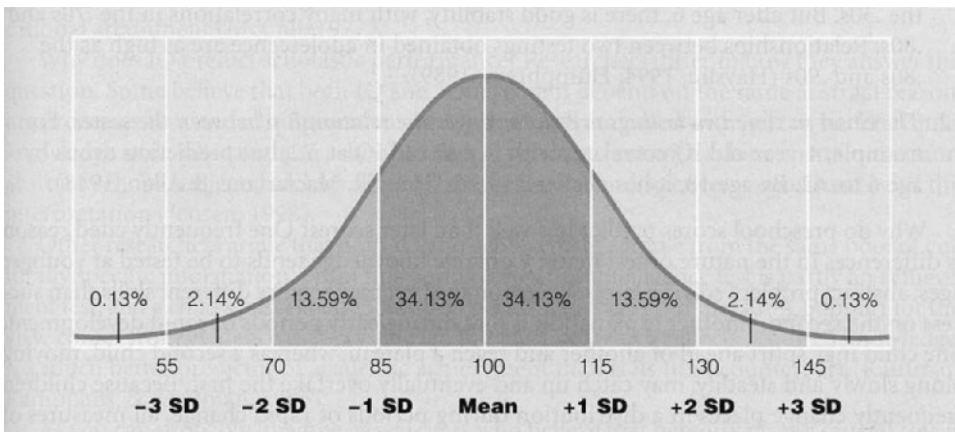


Figure 1. The normal curve. Scores on intelligence tests tend to form a normal, bell-shaped curve. Taken from Berk, L. E. (2003). *Child development*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p. 323.

intelligence score, as well as verbal and performance scores. The tests, downward extensions of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, are now more widely used by psychologists than the Stanford-Binet. Both the Stanford-Binet and the WISC are useful for predicting children's academic success. Neither the Wechsler tests nor the Stanford-Binet is sensitive enough to identify learning difficulties in preschool children, but the Stanford-Binet LM (1972) is most successful at identifying exceptionally gifted young children.

Measuring the intelligence of infants and toddlers is a difficult task because infants cannot sit to answer questions or follow directions to perform certain tasks. The Bayley Scales of Infant Development (1993), based on the normative work of Arnold Gesell, is considered the best measure of infant development from 1 to 42 months. The mental scale includes sensory perceptual acuity, discriminations, learning and problem solving, verbal ability, and concept formation. The motor scale includes muscle control as well as gross and fine motor abilities. The testing professional also rates attitude, interest, emotion, energy, activity, and responsiveness using the Behavior Rating Scale. The Bayley Scales which assess sensorimotor skills are poor predictors of later intelligence scores because different aspects of intelligence (language, thinking, and problem solving) are assessed at later ages. Infant tests are helpful for identifying for further observation and intervention, infants who are likely to have developmental problems. The Fagan Test of Infant Intelligence, which measures habituation/recovery to visual stimuli, predicts childhood IQ better than do the Bayley Scales.

Intelligence test scores tend to be distributed normally among the population. Most intelligence tests convert their raw scores so the mean (average) score is 100 and the standard deviation (average variability) is 15. As you can see in the figure above, 68 percent of individual scores fall into the average range (IQs between 85 and 115); 13.59 percent of scores fall between 70 and 85 and 13.59 percent fall between 115 and 130. Only 2.27 percent of people score higher than 130 and 2.27 percent score lower than 70. The Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler tests are periodically restandardized to keep the mean at 100. Since 1930, intelligence test

performance has been rising worldwide, a phenomenon called the Flynn effect in honor of New Zealand researcher, James Flynn, who first calculated the extent of the effect.

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Carol S. Huntsinger

Interagency Education Research Initiative (IERI)

The Interagency Education Research Initiative (IERI) is concerned with the generalizability of evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve preK–12 student learning outcomes in reading, mathematics, and science. A main emphasis is on understanding the impacts of interventions implemented in a variety of contexts with diverse populations and the prospects that can be successfully scaled-up to similar effect with larger numbers of students. Since its inception in 1999, IERI has supported hundreds of projects across the United States, including many early childhood projects that address early development of reading and other literacy skills, scaling up preschool mathematics curricula, and using technology to support at-risk children's development and learning and preschool teachers' professional development. IERI is a collaborative effort of the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. The three agencies developed the program building on recommendations contained in a 1997 report of the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology. Information on IERI-supported projects can be found online at <http://drdc.uchicago.edu/community/main.phtml>. The number and complexity of these projects prevents simple summarization, but a wealth of information on how teachers can improve teaching skills, change the way math, science, and reading are taught, or both, is contained in the individual project descriptions at that Web site.

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Douglas H. Clements, Julie Sarama, and Sarah-Kathryn McDonald

International Journal of Early Childhood (IJEK)

The *International Journal of Early Childhood* is one of the oldest scientific journals in the field of Early Childhood Education, with a history of thirty-seven

years. This journal is published by OMEP (Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire), a nongovernmental organisation that has about seventy member countries from all continents of the world. Children's life and education in different cultures are therefore central to this journal. The scope of the journal is on key issues in the field of early childhood education and care as they pertain to children ages 0–8 years.

The journal has two issues per year, of which one has a specific theme and the other has mixed articles. Themes of specific interest are those focused on multicultural issues, children's learning and sustainable development, infants and toddlers in ECE, children's rights, and **curriculum**. Articles about making children in different cultures visible and cross-cultural studies within ECE are especially welcome. All articles are peer reviewed and may be written in English, French, or Spanish.

Ingrid Pramling Samuelson

International Journal of Early Years Education

The *International Journal of Early Years Education* offers a comparative perspective on research and major new initiatives in the care and education of young children. The journal, published three times per year, is a forum for researchers and practitioners to debate the theories, research, policy, and practice that sustain effective early years education worldwide.

The journal carries a regular book review section, and has recently published articles from the United Kingdom, India, Zimbabwe, and Hong Kong covering subjects such as phonological awareness, the effects of food and nutrition on learning, classroom noise, and cultural diversity awareness amongst children.

The *International Journal of Early Years Education* is published by Routledge. For more information, please visit <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09669760.asp>.

Iram Siraj-Blatchford

International Journal of Special Education

The first volume of the *International Journal of Special Education* appeared twenty-one years ago at the University of British Columbia. Its purpose was to connect all special educators around the world and to provide a channel for exchange of ideas to facilitate provision of appropriate education to all children with special needs. However, the editors soon discovered that teachers in the Third World do not have funds for subscribing to professional publications nor to pay fees to professional organizations abroad. The journal is today readily available to all special educators at the Web site given below.

Today, the increasing number of manuscripts submitted to the *Journal* from countries where special education is being offered for the first time seems to indicate that more and more children with special needs are being served. The

Journal grants permission to copy articles for educational purposes. The editorial board represents many countries and helps promote mutual professional understanding. Teachers in training, practicing teachers, university personnel involved with the preparation of special educators, and parent organizations in special education form the main readership.

Web Site: *International Journal of Special Education*, www.internationaljournalofspecialeducation.com.

Marg Csapo

International Kindergarten Union (IKU)

The International Kindergarten Union (IKU) was established in 1892, during the annual conference of the National Kindergarten Union (NEA) at Saratoga Springs, New York. Members of a committee appointed by its Kindergarten Department to plan exhibits for the next year's Columbian Exposition in Chicago were concerned about the departure from Froebelian kindergarten philosophy of "learning through play" being expressed at the conference. Their goals were to promote establishment of **kindergartens**, to unite the various kindergarten groups, to disseminate information about proper education of children aged 3–7, and to elevate the status and level of professional training of teachers. In addition to kindergarten teachers, IKU membership included women without formal training who had been supporting the early kindergartens. For example, the first president was Sarah B. Cooper, a philanthropist who supported San Francisco kindergartens.

As IKU members tried to express their philosophy, they attempted to reconcile basic internal disagreements. By 1907, these were categorized by the degree of adherence to the system introduced by Friedrich **Froebel** and his followers in the 1830s and 1840s. There was general agreement about the importance of self-activity, the relationship between children and the environment, and the idea of development as guided growth, but disagreements remained. By 1913, their Committee of Nineteen, chaired by Lucy **Wheelock**, published a final compromise representing three subcommittees instead of a summary statement of goals and objectives. In it, the Progressives, chaired by **Patty Smith Hill**, followed Froebel's instructions to continue developing his system by utilizing new psychological and philosophical research. The Conservatives, led by Susan **Blow**, believed in loving but authoritarian dictated use of the play materials and activities that they attributed to Froebel. A Conservative-Liberal group included those who would not commit to either position.

The organization grew from its original thirty members. In 1924, a national office was established in Washington, DC, and they began publication of *Childhood Education*. Annual conferences brought further discussions about preferred practices, with testing instruments becoming a major concern in the 1920s. As kindergartens became part of the public educational system by the 1920s, the English concept of nursery schools for younger ages gained attention. A further split in membership took place. In 1926, Patty Smith Hill initiated the Committee on Nursery Schools, precursor of today's **National Association for the Education**

of **Young Children** (NAEYC). By 1930, the IKU adopted a new constitution and merged with the National Council of Primary Education, becoming the Association for Childhood Education. From its inception, the IKU had fostered linkages with other countries, and in 1946, after World War II, the organization became the **Association for Childhood Education International** (ACEI).

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Dorothy W. Hewes

International Reading Association (IRA)

The International Reading Association promotes high literacy levels by focusing on improvements in reading instruction, reading research and information, and the importance of a lifetime reading habit. Diverse reading professionals, including teachers, reading specialists, faculty, and researchers, are among the IRA's 80,000 members. With councils and affiliates in a hundred countries, the International Reading Association network extends to 300,000 people worldwide.

The resources and activities of the International Reading Association further the following five goals:

- *Professional Development* to advance knowledge of the field by reading educators worldwide
- *Advocacy* for policy, practices, and research that improve instruction and promote the best interests of all learners and reading professionals
- *Partnerships* with national and international governments, nongovernmental organizations, community agencies, and business and industry to strengthen and support literacy efforts
- *Research* that informs the decisions made by professionals, policymakers, and the public
- *Global Literacy Development* that identifies and focuses leadership and resources on significant literacy issues worldwide

IRA Programs

Advocacy and global outreach. Members seek influence in policy, curriculum, and education reform initiatives that affect literacy, reading, and reading instruction. IRA recommendations in these areas are disseminated through position statements. Government relation reports reflect advocacy by the legislative action team related to U.S. policy.

Global projects, like Pan-African Reading for All, encourage professional communication and collaboration across borders. Educators' needs are met by region through international development committees. Teacher education and professional standards development are examples of IRA initiatives that increase awareness and recognition of reading professionals.

Awards and grants. IRA grants and awards honor teaching, service to the profession, research, media coverage, and writers and illustrators of children's books. Grants support professional development, graduate studies, and action research. Some awards and grants are only available for international programs and achievement.

Councils and affiliates. IRA councils and affiliates facilitate direct and immediate access to educators. Through this network, IRA's community extends to more than 300,000 reading professionals in hundred countries.

Meetings and events. The Association's meetings and events include large and small conferences and gatherings across the globe. A weeklong annual convention, held each spring in a North American city, represents a premiere professional development opportunity. A one-day research conference precedes this meeting. World Congresses are held biennially, and the cosponsored Pan-African Conference is also a biennial event. National, regional, and state/provincial meetings occur throughout the year.

Publications. The Ira publishes more than one hundred print and nonprint resources, with twenty-five to thirty new titles added each year. The professional journals affiliated with IRA include the following:

- *The Reading Teacher*, directed toward preschool, primary, and elementary school educators
- *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, directed toward middle school, secondary, college, and adult educators
- *Reading Research Quarterly* for those interested in reading theory and research
- *Lectura y Vida*, a Spanish-language journal based in Latin America
- *Reading Online*, an electronic journal with a special focus on literacy and technology
- *Thinking Classroom* (also available in Russian, as *Peremena*), that focuses on the ways students acquire, create, question, and apply knowledge responsibly

IRA's bimonthly newspaper, *Reading Today*, is received by all members and contains news and features about the reading profession, as well as information about Association activities.

Beth Cady

IQ. See Intelligence Quotient

IRA. See International Reading Association

Isaacs, Susan (1885–1948)

Susan Isaacs was a British educator and psychologist influenced by John Dewey in early education and Sigmund Freud in psychoanalysis. Her positions as Head of the Department of Child Development at the University of London's Institute of

Education and the Head of the Malting House School in Cambridge effectively combined her dual interests. Two books about her Malting House School experiences continue to influence early childhood educators worldwide. *Intellectual Growth of the Young Child (IG)* (1930) and *Social Development of the Young Child (SD)* (1972) capture Isaac's educational thought and practice. A third volume of case histories explaining her observations of children was never published.

Isaacs addresses the range of children's development from infancy through young childhood, emphasizing the infant's acute sense of touch and the belief that very young children have feelings that reflect positive and negative attitudes and events. Isaacs' psychoanalytic training supported her belief that even infants have a "mental" life, that they experience fear and rage from the earliest days of life.

Children possess a need for social exchange as members of a team and a family as they learn to interact and communicate. They experience and share disappointment and joy. Today, early educators discuss brain development and appropriate practices; Isaacs was among the first to describe these concepts and their practical aspects. Isaacs believed that schools are intended to stimulate the active inquiry of the children themselves, rather than to "teach" them. Children want to "find out" about the things in their world—not to be taught, but to discover by searching. Her theoretical aims were to find suitable ways of giving satisfaction to "finding out" among all the other educative impulses of children; and to discover the beginnings of the scientific spirit and method in the thought of young children.

In *Social Development in Young Children*, Isaacs shuns quantitative measurements of young children. This study, like the earlier volume, *Intellectual Growth*, is based upon the spontaneous behavior of children in the real situations of their daily life. The books' primary aim is the direct qualitative study of the individual children's feelings and doings as they interact with others.

Isaacs states that she "was a trained teacher of young children and a student of Dewey's educational theories long before [she] knew anything about Freud" (Isaacs, 1972, p. 19). She emphasized, as follows, the distinctions between analysis and education, the overlap that must reflect both analysts and educators recognizing, valuing, and understanding the basic characteristics of each field.

1. The analyst must accept all feelings. . .of love and hate, acceptance and aggression, and address them all appropriately. The educator must focus primarily on the good and positive aspects of the child's feelings.
2. The analyst must focus on the child's therapeutic progress and how well he is handling aggression. The educator must use the unconscious only as it appears naturally as interests of the child at the moment.
3. The analyst plays various roles as he/she works with the child to uncover fears and negative feelings. The teacher mainly acts as . . . the wise parent figure, thinking positively (Isaacs, 1972, p. 456).

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Edna Ranck

J

Journal of Children and Media

The *Journal of Children and Media* is an interdisciplinary and multimethod peer-reviewed publication that provides a space for discussion by scholars and professionals from around the world and across theoretical and empirical traditions who are engaged in the study of media in the lives of children. It is a unique intellectual forum for the exchange of information about all forms and contents of media in regards to all aspects of children's lives, and especially in three complementary realms: children as consumers of media, representations of children in the media, and media organizations and productions for children and by them. It is committed to the facilitation of international dialogue among researchers and professionals, through discussion of interaction between children and media in local, national, and global contexts; concern for diversity issues; a critical and empirical inquiry informed by a variety of theoretical and empirical approaches; and dedication to ensuring the social relevance of the academic knowledge it produces to the cultural, political, and personal welfare of children around the world. In addition to research articles, the journal also features a Review and Commentary section which includes book reviews, suggestions for new directions in theory and research, notes on work-in-progress, commentary on developments within the field of children and media, responses to past journal articles, contributions to pedagogy and informal education practices, commentary on media production for children and media literacy programs, and reflections on ways to bridge the concerns of academia and activism. The current editor of the journal is Dafna Lemish from Tel Aviv University and the journal is published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. For more information, see <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/17482798.asp>.

Dafna Lemish

JECTE. See *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*

JEI. See *Journal of Early Intervention*

Journal of Early Childhood Research

The *Journal of Early Childhood Research* provides a major international forum for the dissemination of early childhood research, crossing disciplinary boundaries and applying theory and research within a multiprofessional community. This journal's focus reflects a worldwide growth in theoretical and empirical research on learning and development in early childhood and the impact of this on services provided.

The journal's overarching aim is to promote high quality, international early childhood research findings that are at the forefront of current theory and practice and that generate new knowledge to enhance the lives of young children and their families. This will be achieved by doing the following:

- providing access to the expanding multidisciplinary knowledge base;
- exposing and stimulating debate on current controversies in the field—methodological and ethical;
- considering the implications and applications of such findings for the improvement of life chances of young children and their families;
- establishing a means for collaborative links between early childhood research centres in the international context.

Given these aims, the journal is interdisciplinary, drawing, for instance, from anthropology, epidemiology, education, health and medicine, law, neurology, paediatrics, philosophy, psychology, social policy and welfare, and sociology.

Since the intention is to disseminate international research germane to the area of early childhood and foster an international research culture, the primary audience is established academics and researchers, as well as new researchers, postgraduate students, and undergraduates, completing final-year projects and dissertations. The journal's role in bringing new knowledge on early childhood into the field will appeal equally, however, to the growing range of multiprofessional teams working on behalf of young children and their families.

Carol Aubrey

Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education (JECTE)

The *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education (JECTE)* is the professional journal of the **National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE)**. *JECTE* evolved from the NAECTE newsletter, the *Bulletin* (1979–1989), and was established in 1989 as the official journal of NAECTE. In 1990, the NAECTE Governing Board appointed an editor and editorial board that developed manuscript review criteria and implemented a blind review process. The first refereed issue of the journal was published in Spring 1990. The journal was first produced by university desktop publishing. Publication was shifted in 1997 to commercial publishers.

The purpose of the journal reflects the purposes of NAECTE: to provide an issues forum, a means of communication, and an interchange of information and ideas about practice and research in early childhood teacher education. *JECTE* publishes original manuscripts, book reviews, research reports, position papers, letters to the editor, information on association activities, essays on current issues, and

reflective reports on innovative early childhood teacher education practices. The journal is a membership benefit of NAECTE and is published quarterly including one-theme issue. For additional information, contact NAECTE at www.naecte.org.

Kathryn Castle

Journal of Early Intervention (JEI)

The *Journal of Early Intervention (JEI)* is a peer-reviewed journal related to research and practice in **early intervention**. Early intervention is defined broadly as resources, supports, and procedures that support the development and early learning of infants and young children with special needs, their families, or the personnel who serve them. *JEI* is the official research journal of the **Division for Early Childhood (DEC)** of the **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**. Six individuals have served terms as editor since the journal was first published in 1979 as the *Journal of the Division for Early Childhood*: Merle Karnes (1981–1988), Samuel Odom (1988–1991), Donald Bailey (1991–1994), Steven Warren (1994–1997), R. A. McWilliam (1997–2002), and Patricia Snyder (2002–2007). In 1989, the journal was renamed the *Journal of Early Intervention*. *JEI* is annotated and indexed widely. Additional information about the journal, including editorial policies and author guidelines, is located at www.dec-sped.org.

Patricia Snyder

The Journal of Special Education Leadership

The Journal of Special Education Leadership provides both practicing administrators and researchers of special education administration and policy with relevant tools and sources of research on recent advances in administrative theory, policy, and practice. *The Journal of Special Education Leadership* is a refereed journal that directly supports the main objectives of The Council for Administrators of Special Education, a division of the Council for Exceptional Children, to foster research, learning, teaching, and practice in the field of special education administration and to encourage the extension of special education administration knowledge to other areas of leadership and policy. Articles for the *Journal* should enhance knowledge and contribute to a body of research about the process of managing special education service delivery systems, as well as reflect on techniques, trends, and issues that are significant. Preference is given to articles that have a broad appeal, wide applicability, and immediate usefulness to administrators, other practitioners, and researchers.

Mary Boscardin

Jumpstart

Jumpstart is a national organization that believes early literacy is a fundamental building block of success. Founded in 1993 by college students, parents, and **Head Start** staff, Jumpstart launched its first school-year program at Yale University. Jumpstart has since expanded to twenty-four states and Washington, DC.

Jumpstart's preschool goal is to enhance the literacy, language, social, and emotional development of children through positive adult-child interaction and family involvement. Jumpstart's philosophy and research-based approach incorporate recommendations from recent best practices from the field of early education, including the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), the **High/Scope** Educational Research Foundation, and the Stony Brook Reading and Language Project's dialogic reading method.

Jumpstart partners with higher education institutions and early learning programs that share a commitment to the basic tenants of **developmentally appropriate practice** and quality early childhood education. Jumpstart's intensive enrichment program trains a college student, called a Jumpstart Corps member, to work one-to-one with a 3-5-year-old child in Head Start or similar early learning programs. During the eight-month school year, Corps members hold twice, weekly, two-hour Jumpstart sessions, structured-classroom sessions set aside for a team of nine or 10 Corps members to devote attention to children following the traditional school day. Corps members spend additional time in their child's classroom supporting the classroom teacher and other students.

Jumpstart Corps members receive sixty hours of training in early childhood education and learn to facilitate children's development following four key principles:

- 1) Utilize developmentally appropriate practices,
- 2) engage children in active learning,
- 3) strike a balance between adult and child-initiated learning, and
- 4) support children's early or emergent reading and writing.

Corps members implement these principles during Jumpstart sessions through *One-to-One Reading* with each child; *Circle Time* to foster socialization and to build a sense of community through active group learning; *Choice Time* to foster independence, curiosity, and self-esteem; and *Small Group Activity* to introduce common, self-paced activities, focusing on a beginning, middle, and end.

Using a pre- and post-assessment of language and literacy, social, and initiative skills, Jumpstart tracks children's progress, measures program impact, and continuously improves content and delivery. Annual assessments conducted by independent consultants show that Jumpstart children begin the school year with skills rated lower than their peers but make greater progress than their peers in language and literacy, social, and initiative skill areas by the end of the year.

During the 2004-2005 school year, Jumpstart served more than 8,000 children by partnering with 66 higher education institutions and 200 early learning programs. The organization averages 30 percent annual growth and is evaluating several expansion opportunities, including expanding its program to partner with more colleges and universities across the country, expanding existing programs by enrolling more college students, and exploring different volunteer populations that could deliver the Jumpstart program to preschool children.

Kim Davenport and Alison Pitzer

K

Kindergarten

The term “kindergarten” in the United States traditionally refers to the year of school that precedes “formal” schooling in first grade. In other countries, the term “kindergarten” often designates group settings for young children that precedes the beginning of formal schooling, and encompasses children from three- to six or seven years of age. In Israel, for example, children between five and six years of age attend “compulsory kindergarten” and younger children are educated in “recompulsory kindergarten” (Micholwitz [sic], 1992, p. 307). Kindertgartens in the United States are universally available and most young children attend them. The age for entry into kindergarten is set by individual states. As expectations have escalated for what children will learn and be able to do during this year of schooling, children’s entry age has changed.

The term “kindergarten” originated with Friedrich **Froebel**’s nineteenth-century notion of a children’s garden in Germany. Spiritually based, his kindergarten included the development of many new child-centered materials. Robert **Owen**, a Scottish contemporary of Froebel during the Industrial Revolution, offered kindergarten as an on-site service to young children and their families as an alternative to child labor in factories. Kindergarten came to the United States in the mid-1800s and quickly spread through the efforts of individually committed women and philanthropists. The first public school kindergarten was offered in St. Louis, Missouri. It has since become a mainstay of public education in the United States.

Government oversight of kindergarten programs in the Unites States occurs primarily at the state level. Individual communities, though, have a great deal of latitude in setting rules and standards for their schools, including kindertgartens. Kindergarten programs also are sponsored by private and community-based organizations such as religious institutions, community centers, and industrial settings. These privately sponsored programs often operate with fewer regulations than public school-sponsored programs.

Brief History of Kindergarten

Since Froebel's time, the kindergarten has undergone a number of transformations. The growth of the **child study movement** in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century and the **progressive education** movement in the beginning of the twentieth century influenced a child-oriented alternative to what had become a lockstep **curriculum** format. Kindergarten became increasingly viewed as a program concerned with children's overall development and with assisting children's acclimation to the more structured instructional environment of formal schooling. Its curriculum was characterized by a tradition of "free play" during which children might select sociodramatic play in a housekeeping center or block building or drawing or puzzles or table top manipulative materials. There also was time for outdoor (or indoor gymnasium) play, which might mean recess with children choosing from among balls, climbing equipment, wagons, or tricycles; or it might also mean group games organized by the teacher for the whole group; or a combination of these activities.

Over time, however, kindergartens have been viewed less and less as a year of transition to formal schooling and more and more as a child's first year of official schooling. This trend has been exacerbated by the onset of formalized state enforced content and early learning standards (what children should know and be able to do), driving many kindergartens to focus more intently on the provision of structured curricula.

Contemporary Issues

The development of kindergarten programming has been and continues to be influenced by a variety of cultural, social, political, and economic contexts. These particular cultural contexts and values influence how policymakers interpret the outcomes desired from children's participation in kindergartens, what they will experience, and when they will attend. They also influence parents' expectations and what and how adults teach during the kindergarten year. A clear connection exists between a community's philosophical stance on how young children develop and learn, and their expectations for kindergarten education. Communities and the cultures they represent often emphasize in different degrees the values of cooperation or individualism, achievement of technical skills or social skills, an emphasis on contemporary experience or future work life.

High-Stakes Tests

In recent years, with the advent of the accountability movement, there has been an increasing incursion into the kindergarten of academic thrusts. There now are many kindergartens that require children to sit with worksheets and workbooks, to finish teacher-directed required work, with reduced time available for play. Many early childhood educators express concern over the loss of child-directed learning and the growing focus on isolated skills, drills, and rote learning of letters, numbers, colors, and shapes with the use of paper and pencil formats.

Retention and Redshirting

When kindergarten children do not achieve sufficiently high grades or test scores by the conclusion of the kindergarten year, some schools are requiring their retention in kindergarten or in a “transitional” first grade for an additional year.

Despite research evidence suggesting that these practices do not produce measurable differences in children’s success with learning or later grades (Shepard and Graue, 1993; Crosser, 2004), a trend exists to increase the age of kindergarten entry. Thus, children in some communities might enter kindergarten if they turned five years of age before December while in other communities they might need to have turned five years of age by September, or earlier. This practice of postponing entry into a program with the expectancy that children will develop sufficiently over the ensuing months is called redshirting. This policy reflects growing pressure for children to do more, sooner.

Instructional Framework

With changing expectations for what children will achieve during the kindergarten year, the focus and implementation style of the kindergarten curriculum is receiving increased scrutiny. Research studies tend to support approaches that involve a combination of direct instruction in conjunction with more open-ended approaches to teaching and learning.

A cross-cultural study of kindergarten children’s academic achievement and cognitive ability concluded that “the kinds of academic information and skills taught in kindergarten may be conveyed more effectively by indirect than by direct forms of teaching and by informal example than by formal instruction” (Stevenson, Lee and Graham, 1993, p. 529). A comprehensive review of research further suggests that the **direct instructional** model alone appears to reflect short-term achievement gains but the “child-initiated” programs tended toward long-term academic advantages (Crosser, 2004, p. 138).

A research study on **literacy** instruction in kindergarten concluded that a combination of integrated language arts instruction as well as direct phonics instruction resulted in improved achievement measures when compared with either single method of instruction (Xue and Meisels, 2004). The preponderance of research on children who had engaged in whole language instruction indicated that they considered themselves to be good readers and had positive attitudes toward reading as compared with children schooled with a main focus on phonics skills.

Full Day Kindergarten

Kindergarten children are in school between two and a half and six hours each weekday. Until recently, it was considered developmentally inappropriate for young children to be in extended-day early learning settings. This point of view has largely shifted. In the United States, public schools increasingly are offering full day kindergartens, moving from half-day to full school day programming. There have been reviews of research concerning the efficacy of the full-day program (Entwhistle and Alexander, 1998; Gullo, 2000; Kauerz, 2005). In general, children

from low-income families or second-language homes appear to reap the greatest benefits of a longer kindergarten day.

Conclusion

The educational role of kindergarten is under extensive review. A year of school caught between the educational worlds of early childhood education and elementary schooling, it increasingly is being recognized as a pivotal year of learning and transition. Given changing social, political, and economic contexts—including our nation's focus on reducing the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income children and ensuring children are well-prepared for a global economy—kindergartens are increasingly being recognized as an opportunity for forging better alignment between the K-12 and early childhood education systems (Collaborating Organizations, AFT and CCW/AFTEF, CSSO, ECS, NAESP, NEA and NAEYC, 2005). *See also* Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Doris Pronin Fromberg

Kohlberg, Lawrence (1927–1987)

Lawrence Kohlberg founded the cognitive developmental position on moral development and moral education. Born in Westchester County, New York, he was the son of a wealthy businessman and the youngest of four children. Brilliant even as a child, he decided not to go to the university and instead went off to wander the country, living without money and learning firsthand about the tougher side of life. He then joined up with the Merchant Marines as World War II

was drawing to a close and signed on to a ship that was smuggling Jewish refugees out of war-torn Europe through the British blockade into Palestine. Moved by his experiences, he attended the University of Chicago, where he earned his B.A. in one year and received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 1958.

The war had presented issues of moral duty and social justice. After studying moral philosophy and psychology, he conducted highly original research in which he posed moral dilemmas to ninety-eight boys aged 10–16 and developed a system of coding to analyze the logical structure of their qualitative arguments. His theory challenged the dominant socialization model of moral development based on social-learning theory and posited a structural model that was a major extension and elaboration of Piaget's writings about children's conceptions of rules, games, and fair punishment.

Kohlberg set forth six stages of moral judgment stretching from early childhood to adulthood, and he presented empirical and theoretical arguments for their invariance and universality across history and cultures. Recognized immediately as a major theorist and researcher, Kohlberg went on to brief stays at Yale and the Center for Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University before he was appointed Professor of Psychology and Education at Harvard University in 1968. He set forth the major outlines of his theory in *Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive Developmental Approach to Socialization* (1968), and many other publications. In *Development as the Aim of Education* (1971), he and Rochelle Mayer stated that education should be democratic and nonindoctrinative and should stimulate children's thinking in a direction of development, which is universal for all children.

Kohlberg taught at the Harvard Graduate School of Education for almost twenty years, where he established an influential circle of students and colleagues, many of whom contributed to the expanding research base on the theory and applications. Much of Kohlberg's energy in later years was devoted to envisioning a just community approach to education, implemented in school and prison settings. These democratic communities had the goals of fostering moral reasoning and empathy development, creating a moral atmosphere of mutual respect and caring, and being models for institutional change. In 1973, Kohlberg's health was badly damaged by a chronic parasitic infection he caught on a research trip to Guyana, and he was eventually overwhelmed by physical pain and mental suffering and he died at age 59. Kohlberg was recognized for his lifetime contributions by the Society for Research in Child Development. He left two sons by his former wife.

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L

Laboratory Schools

The earliest American laboratory schools, frequently referred to as child development laboratories (CDLs), started to appear in the late 1800s, and were initially sites that reflected best practices in public schools. Today, most child development laboratories are on college and university campuses and they provide settings for research, teacher education, and early care and education for young children.

In 1883, Colonel Francis Wayland Parker, superintendent of schools in Quincy, Massachusetts, became principal of the Cook County Normal School in Chicago, and later opened the Francis W. Parker School in 1901. At his “practice school,” visiting teachers and even persons outside the teaching profession could observe his ideas in operation. His published Course of Study, which included descriptions of materials, devices, and methods, had wide circulation and affected the classroom practices of hundreds of public school teachers.

In 1894, John Dewey joined the University of Chicago as Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy. His “Dewey School” opened in January 1896 with about twelve students aged six to nine years of age, two teachers, and an instructor who was listed as “in charge of manual training.” His school was a laboratory, in the sense of an experimental place where one’s theory of education could be put into practice, tested, and scientifically evaluated.

The concept of practice, experimentation, and research became integrally linked to the first wave of laboratory schools at Columbia University and Bank Street College. Campus nursery schools made their appearance in the early 1920s, when several universities, colleges, and research centers established them as experimental schools for training very young children. Still other laboratory schools began as settings where teachers could be trained to work with young children—one of the first was the **Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center** established in Boston in 1922.

By 1930 laboratory nursery schools had been established at several institutions of higher education including Iowa State, the University of Minnesota, the

University of Wisconsin, Wellesley College, Vassar, and the University of New Hampshire. Over the next two decades, child development laboratories became a popular method of training university students about young children (Osborn, 1991). The Ruggles Street Nursery School eventually became a department of child development at Tufts University with its own laboratory school, renamed the Eliot-Pearson Children's School.

Throughout this period, child development laboratory schools were identified by a particular constellation of purposes. The first was to provide a high-quality early childhood program to young children and their families, and many campus programs are considered exemplary models, although difficult to replicate in "real world" settings. As such, they provided an important university and public service to their communities. CDLs also served important campus instructional needs, serving as a location to introduce students to young children, and to train undergraduates and in some cases graduate students strategies for working effectively with young children. On some campuses, CDLs involved students from many departments interested in observing how children develop. A third purpose has been to provide a location where students can learn how to conduct research involving children and/or their families, and to support faculty research.

In the 1960s and 1970s, some laboratory schools were closed as a result of budget shortfalls and space limitations, but also because there was lack of clarity about the value of the existing models. Many were perceived as "country clubs," serving primarily white, upper-class university faculty members and administrators, and only available to mothers who could afford to be at home during the day. Often, CDLs served as the only location for a student's teacher preparation, raising concerns about preparing future teachers for the "real" world. Some questioned the usefulness of research results based on a narrow pool of children utilizing such programs. Finally there was an increasing demand by students, and to a lesser degree by faculty members, for full and also flexible day care. As a result, there was a reduction in campus-based nursery school programs and an increase in full-day programs (McBride, 1996), only some of which also served as laboratory settings.

Today, there are estimated to be over 2100 programs serving young children in all types of college settings, about half of which are CDLs housed in academic departments. At least three issues remain (Bowers, 2000): the cost of (and need of subsidy for) campus-based CDLs, the increasing popularity of early childhood majors to undergraduates, and the possible impact of new technology on training future teachers. These issues are reflected in the considerable variation in the function, administrative unit, and parent population of CDLs. A study of NCCCC members (Thomas, 1995) found that 52 percent described their function as laboratory school and child-care service. A majority (39%) of campus children's centers were housed in academic departments, with student services (29%) the next most likely administrative unit. Most campus centers enrolled children of students, faculty and staff, and over half (64%) also accepted children from the community-at-large. Campus centers typically enrolled children from infancy (38%) to preschool age (98%), with some offering kindergarten (28%) and before and after school programs (20%).

In spite of the financial pressures (Kalinowski, 2000) and concerns about elitism, future prospects for laboratory schools remain positive. Parents' interest in high-quality child care, employer interest in attracting and retaining strong, and younger faculty with impending baby boomer retirements, a greater and more sophisticated understanding of resource centered management (RCM), and an increased interest in the value of high-quality programs for teacher training should result in an increase in campus child-care variations, and also an increase in the number of campus CDLs in the coming decade. There will be a growing need to explore new ideas in early childhood education, for example, in translating principles and practices from **Reggio Emilia** into effective educational experiences and learning environments for U.S. children, preservice teachers, and members of the community. It is essential that laboratory schools return to the cutting edge of innovation and experimentation regarding the design and implementation of exemplary services to children and their families for many reasons, including the political ones of balancing the effects of the **No Child Left Behind Act** and high stakes testing of children. CDLs were initially programs that demonstrated best practices and served as experimental places where theories could be tested, and innovative approaches to education analyzed and evaluated. They should take on, once again, the mantle of creative, productive, and valuable laboratories.

Three national organizations promote the work of CDLs, including the National Coalition of Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC), the National Organization of Child Development Laboratory Schools (NOCDSL), and the National Association of Laboratory Schools (NALS). The Council for Child Development Laboratory Administrators (CCDLA) has been an important regional organization in the Northeast.

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Michael Kalinowski and Maria K. E. Labman

Language Development. See Development, Language

Language Diversity

Language use in early childhood classrooms is of growing interest and concern in the United States, where increasing numbers of children speak languages not spoken by their teachers. According to popular wisdom, there are over 6,000

languages in use today around the world. Educators know that speakers of a large proportion of these languages populate schools around the globe. Thus an understanding of linguistic diversity is key to understanding young learners of language and other skills and understandings, whether or not a classroom is designated “monolingual,” “bilingual,” or “multilingual.” To better understand and support language in the multicultural classroom, it is necessary to understand language development as it characterizes children’s engagement with the social and physical world and demonstrates the inherent sociolinguistic diversity of early childhood.

How Language Begins

Language, broadly defined, is a system that relates symbols—spoken, gestured, or written—to meanings. Its components include sounds or gestures; morphemes, the building blocks of words; grammatical rules that children eventually use to build sentences; and pragmatic rules that underlie the structure of conversations. Language is also a social phenomenon that begins well before children utter their first words. Imagining infants in or out of the home setting, then, we can think of them learning a symbol system in the company of others. Caregivers respond in varied ways to sounds, facial expressions, laughter, movements, and gestures as elements of early communication—infants’ first use of symbols to communicate meanings. Sociolinguists, researchers who focus on the social aspects of language, have demonstrated how differences among groups of infants and their caregivers emerge early in development, so that diversity and not uniformity becomes the norm in human interactions (Heath, 1983). Put another way, when any aspect of an interactive situation changes, a change in communicating can be obvious (for example, switching languages) or subtle (changing posture or facial expression). Young children are attuned to such situational differences well before they can talk about them.

For example, adults and children within the same family or social group become attuned to the patterns of particular “melodies,” high pitched or lower pitched, softer or louder, orchestrated with a range of movements, along with other aspects of communication. However, a major difference between infants learning language at home versus in a group setting is that in the latter there are always *infants*, more than one, who interact with caregivers and each other before they utter their first words. The infants may or may not belong to the same social and linguistic groups as their caregivers and peers. Thus the possibility for difference or variation in ways of communicating across groups may be present from life’s start.

Language as Play

With or without words, a key component of children’s interactions with each other is their playfulness. Through **play** with sounds, gestures, and, for most children, words, children participate in conversations about the physical and social worlds. They engage in varied forms of interaction and eventually transform

gestures and movements into meanings in an imagined world. Through play—and the language that is a part of play—children first exercise control over the everyday world.

Play and storytelling often intertwine. When the curriculum of early childhood classrooms contains space for both, children's language is frequently heard and can be documented by teacher researchers. Paley (2004), for example, has fashioned her nursery school and kindergarten classrooms into stages for children to dramatize their own stories. Children's views on issues such as fairness and exclusion emerge in the language of stories and the play that is always embedded in them.

Sociolinguistically Diverse from the Start

Once children's communicative symbols resemble the sounds or gestures of specific dialects or languages, the potential for exercising control over the everyday world grows. At the same time there are more opportunities for communication to occur across symbol systems—from nonverbal to spoken, and from one oral linguistic system to another. (See also the entry on **Symbolic Languages** as they have been interpreted and supported in **Reggio Emilia**.) In these cross-system situations there are challenges to participants who know only one system of communication. Teachers who know only English, for example, may feel disadvantaged next to a teacher who is bilingual; a teacher who knows ASL (American Sign Language) has an advantage when working with children who use ASL or are deaf or hard-of-hearing. (See also the entries on **bilingual education** and **second language acquisition**.)

In the diverse settings that support second-language learners, adults work to bridge the linguistic systems. In the observation that follows, a public school prekindergarten teacher, Ms. Chan, is alert to the meanings of children's nonverbal and verbal ways of communicating. Her classroom is seldom quiet, as talk in any language is encouraged in a range of situations, from dramatic play to singing to whole-group read-alouds. Ms. Chan also knows both English and Cantonese, the language spoken by many of the children in her room:

As the teacher begins to read [a book about butterflies], Andy calls out "*Butterflies!*" followed by some Cantonese. As she reads about the egg and the hatching of a tiny caterpillar, James and Andy both talk excitedly in Cantonese in response to Ms. Chan's translation into Cantonese. They both look intently at the pictures that the teacher is showing the class. Once the caterpillar in the book hatched, Andy begins predicting.

Andy: (some Cantonese) . . . *Gonna turn butterfly!*

Ms. Chan: *Yes, it's going to turn into a butterfly.*

Kenneth: *You, you, you gonna open it gonna open and let the butterfly, school . . . out and fly!*

Ms. Chan: *Yeab, we are going to let the butterfly out!*

Andy: (some Cantonese) *Butterfly! Big butterfly!* (Genishi, Yung-Chan, and Stires, 2000, p. 74)

Ms. Chan's ability to understand what Andy and his friends knew and were excited about allowed her to make a small space in her **curriculum** for communicating across languages; that is, her bilingualism and attention to what engaged the children made the **read-aloud** of a book in English accessible to children just beginning to learn English. That piece of the curriculum became both permeable and informative to teacher and children.

This teacher's curriculum makes learning accessible to her English language learners at the same time that it enhances learning in general. Although her bilingualism is a clear advantage for the Cantonese speakers in her class, it is not suggested that only teachers who know the children's languages can be instrumental in their learning. (See Fassler, 2003, for an example of a teacher who knows only English in a classroom made up entirely of English language learners.) Moreover, linguistic differences exist across both languages and *dialects*, varieties of a language that differ in the components of sound, syntax or grammar, meaning system, and rules of use.

"Best Practices"?

The history of language arts education in the United States has shifted periodically in terms of policy regarding children who use languages and dialects other than the "standard," with respect to languages other than English and African American Vernacular English (also referred to as Black English or Ebonics) (Baugh, 2000). With the passage of the **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001, the shift for children whose schools rely on federal funding has clearly been toward prescriptive methods of teaching standard forms to all learners, particularly as they relate to **literacy** (Dyson, 2003).

Much has been written about the need for evidence-based research to help educators identify "best practices" in language and literacy education. Unfortunately the chief measure for what is "best" has become a student's score on a **standardized achievement test**. Thus practices that improve schools' collective test scores in schools receiving federal funding are favored. Regardless of this fixation on test scores, researchers who look for evidence of what children and teachers do in real classrooms over time portray complex practices that cannot be reduced to packaged programs for teaching standard English or to the test scores the programs are intended to raise. Instead classroom researchers find highly specific practices that vary according to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of learners and their teachers. In classrooms where teachers use their knowledge of the children to support their diverse language and literacy learning, researchers note the following general characteristics:

- Teachers are skilled observers and listeners who look and listen for children's own ways of communicating.
- The teachers' daily schedules show flexibility within a predictable framework.
- The curriculum is adapted to allow for group preferences and for individual variation. In other words the teachers adjust to variation and do not expect uniformity.

- These teachers appear to have high expectations. They expect every child learner, whether or not she or he is a second (or multiple) language learner, eventually to enter the community of communicators—speakers or signers, listeners, readers, and writers—in short, to become master learners.

Effective teachers of children in classrooms characterized by language diversity cherish communication and connection. They accept and celebrate everyone's need to be social, to have intentions and ideas and to communicate them freely, and often, to others. *See also* Development, Language.

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Celia Genishi

LD. *See* Learning Disabilities

Leadership. *See* Advocacy and Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Learning Disabilities (LD)

Incidence and Characteristics of Learning Disabilities

Children with learning disabilities (LD) represent over half of those students in the United States identified for special education services during their elementary or secondary school years. International research shows this disability to be a cross-cultural phenomena, a universal problem found among individuals across all languages, nations, and cultures in the world (Lerner and Chen, 1992). Learning disabilities are evident among children learning an alphabet-based system of written language (e.g., English), as well as among children learning a logo-graphic or pictorial system of language as found in Chinese or Japanese (Tsuge, 2001). "Specific learning disabilities" are considered indicative of an underlying neurological disorder. This should not be confused with learning "differences" among children or simple learning "difficulties" which all children likely experience at one time or another.

Most children with learning disabilities are identified and officially diagnosed *after* they enter school and have received several years of academic instruction. Most students are identified between ages 9 and 14 according to data from the

U.S. Department of Education. These disorders in learning become more obvious because of a student's failure to acquire expected skills in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and other subjects associated with the use or understanding of language/language symbols and their meaning. A cumulative history of failure (in one or two areas of academic achievement), along with a discrepancy in performance compared to a student's overall ability, often serve as the catalyst leading to an evaluation and formal diagnosis of LD.

Boys are about four times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with LD. Research suggests, however, that incidence rates for males versus females do not differ significantly. Plausible explanations for this higher frequency of diagnosis among boys include: (a) *cultural factors* (i.e., males may be identified more frequently because they tend to be more aggressive and exhibit disruptive behaviors that adults consider more troublesome), (b) *biological factors* (i.e., males may be more genetically and biologically vulnerable to learning disabilities), and (c) *academic expectations* (i.e., expectations and pressures for school success may be greater for boys than girls, particularly during the higher grades when adolescent priorities may shift regarding academic achievement).

Characteristics or symptoms of learning disabilities (LD) vary from person to person. In fact, LD is a generic label representing a heterogeneous group of conditions that can range from mild to severe. Most individuals with this disability have average or near-average intelligence although LD can occur at all intelligence levels. Some children may even be intellectually gifted or talented in some specific area of achievement yet manifest a learning disability in another area.

Although work in the field of LD has focused primarily on elementary and middle school students, we know this disability can become evident at many stages of life. Manifestations of LD among children or adults at various ages can take a different form. For example, symptoms among school-age students are manifested most often through unexpectedly low levels of achievement in areas such as reading and associated skill areas (e.g., spelling and writing) and/or mathematics. Reading is the most common area of difficulty. Disabilities in math are second most common. In comparison, preschoolers or kindergarten-age youngsters may manifest emerging problems via developmental delays or irregular/abnormal behaviors that cause concern with parents or teachers. Characteristics often noted in young children before a diagnosis of LD is made include: slowness in acquiring age-appropriate speech/language skills, hyperactivity, attention and concentration deficits, poor coordination, poor fine/gross motor skills, difficulties in auditory or visual processing, poor perceptual-motor integration, and a lack of crucial pre-literacy skills. During late elementary and early-middle-school grades, learning difficulties in other academic areas may appear as the curriculum becomes more difficult (e.g., science, social studies, foreign languages). Frustration, anxiety, and tension may accelerate as these students experience repeated failure and become increasingly self-conscious of their learning difficulties compared to peers. This can lead to additional emotional/behavior problems as students attempt to cope with their inability to perform as expected. These secondary outcomes of LD can further complicate diagnosis as well as educational processes and become add-on impediments to successful learning.

Definition of Learning Disabilities

The most widely accepted definition of learning disabilities is contained in U.S. federal law, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** and its regulations (IDEA). IDEA specifies that the term “specific learning disability” means the following:

a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. Such term includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Such term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

This definition of LD has been controversial. Modified definitions are offered by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disability (NJCLD—representatives from several professional organizations and disciplines involved with learning disabilities) and by the Interagency Committee on Learning Disabilities (ICLD—a committee commissioned by the U.S. Congress to develop a definition of learning disabilities). Although slight differences appear across these definitions, there is general agreement on the following five elements that define a learning disability:

1. A neurological disorder or central nervous system dysfunction.
2. A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in using or understanding language (which includes perception or input of language and its meaning, the cognitive processing of language, and finally the expressive output or communication of thoughts/ideas in spoken or written language or other modes of communication).
3. A disorder manifested in an individual’s difficulties in academic and learning tasks (e.g., listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or doing mathematical calculations).
4. A disorder manifested by a discrepancy between a student’s potential and his/her achievement in one or more of these areas (Note: Many professionals continue using this discrepancy concept. However, it is highly controversial including how “discrepancy” should be measured, what criteria apply, and whether this discrepancy model is valid.)
5. A disorder that is *not* the primary result of other disabilities (e.g., mental retardation, emotional disturbance, hearing or vision loss, motor disabilities, or cultural/environmental or economic disadvantage). It is suggested that LD may coexist or be manifested concurrently with other disabilities. However, it is often difficult to determine which condition is primary and which is secondary.

Identification of Learning Disabilities during the Early Childhood Years

The high incidence of LD among school-age students has brought greater urgency to early identification of young children who are at risk for this disability.

Obviously, earlier treatment might minimize the impact of LD upon a student's academic achievement. This is a better strategy than attempting remediation after a student's learning problems/failures have compounded and academic performance has fallen significantly below expected grade level. Formal diagnosis of LD in young children (i.e., birth to eight years), however, is somewhat complicated and presents issues frequently described in the professional literature.

Given the official definition of LD and underlying concepts about what constitutes a "specific learning disability," formal diagnosis of this condition in young children is difficult for several reasons. First, the official definition of learning disabilities focuses upon deficiencies or irregularities in cognitive processes, thinking, and academic performance expected of older children. Young children are early in the process of acquiring these particular skills or cognitive functions. It is difficult to designate behavior as "deficient or indicative of cognitive disability" when a child has no exposure or only limited exposure to formal academic training. One can question whether it is possible to accurately determine the presence of a neurological, cognitive/language-based disability when a child is in the midst of acquiring the very behaviors by which we infer those cognitive processes are functioning normally or abnormally. Yet to identify LD in children during their preschool or early elementary years obviously requires a diagnosis based on behaviors/symptoms that come before cognitive/academic skills are learned and through which learning disabilities are manifested (e.g., reading, writing, spelling, math, etc.). The criteria for diagnosis implied in this accepted definition of LD simply do not apply to young children.

Second, young children develop and learn at different rates. Therefore, development considered "within the normal range" shows considerable variation from child to child. Children reflect this variation not only in their rate or speed of learning but in their level of mastery and quality of performance across the various developmental domains. Educators are well aware of these intra-individual differences (variation within a single child across developmental domains) as well as inter-individual differences (variation across youngsters of the same chronological age), which make each child unique and distinctive from his/her peers. The dilemma here is that some differences in children's learning/developmental characteristics, which elicit concern about potential disabilities, may only reflect this normal developmental variation. They may not be actual symptoms or warning signs of learning disabilities that will persist. It is well understood that many environmental variables, as well as genetic/biological factors, contribute to these intra- and inter-individual differences among children. For example, some variation may result from differences in the early stimulation and learning opportunities children receive during their formative years. Quality of the home environment and parent-child interactions, differences in parenting skills and styles of child-rearing, parent education and family resources all affect how children develop and learn. Educational opportunities available to young children at home and in their surrounding community environment (such as exposure to preschool education) also affect kindergarten **readiness**, preliteracy skills, and later academic achievement.

These individual differences among all children, added to the fact that students diagnosed with LD are an exceedingly diverse, heterogeneous population, further

complicate the task of formal early diagnosis. No two students with LD are alike nor do they manifest exactly the same symptoms or performance profile. Educators and diagnosticians often find it difficult to separate what is merely normal developmental variation/individual differences in young children from deviations that signal a true neurologically based learning disability. It is also difficult to distinguish between young children with a “learning disability” from those who should simply be characterized as “slow-to-develop” or slow learners with generally low achievement.

A third factor complicating formal diagnosis of LD in young children is the fact that certain learning problems or developmental delays can be precursors of other cognitive, behavioral, sensory, or developmental disorders, not just a “learning disability.” Learning disabilities are not the only potential outcome of symptoms described here. To suggest that such deviations or limitations provide a basis for a conclusive, formal diagnosis of LD in a young child may be a presumptuous, premature conclusion. Educators are reluctant to apply the LD label to infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or even primary school-age students.

Early Indicators of Risk for Learning Disabilities among Young Children

Current regulations under U.S. federal law (IDEA) allow the use of a noncategorical diagnosis of “developmental delay” for young children (from birth to nine years) to qualify them for special education services. This general diagnostic label offers greater flexibility and perhaps a more useful alternative for identifying many children needing **early intervention**, including those at risk for learning disabilities. Thus children can be evaluated for indicators of risk and delayed development that are correlated with the later diagnosis of LD. Educators can move ahead with timely treatment and intervention without getting caught up in cumbersome issues surrounding an early formal diagnosis of “learning disability.” The dangers of imposing a potentially inaccurate, premature diagnosis with potentially damaging labels can be avoided.

Precursors or indicators of risk that may be useful in identifying children needing early intervention include developmental delays and/or irregularities in areas described below.

Communication, speech and language skills. Difficulty acquiring speech and in using/understanding language or language symbols are among the most common precursors of LD. Some children may be slow in acquiring vocabulary. Word memory may seem poor. They may appear confused and slow to understand or to execute instructions from an adult. Oral speech may be delayed. When these children do talk, their communications may be unclear and fail to offer a coherent expression of what they are trying to say compared to other kids of the same chronological age. Word usage may be incorrect or seem strange. Children who should be talking in sentences may only be delivering disjointed words or short phrases. They may seem more immature compared to age-mates in initiating a conversation, engaging in interactive dialogue, explaining something, or using appropriate words to express a concept.

Fine/gross motor skills. Slowness in acquiring motor skills, poor coordination, and awkwardness in the performance of fine/gross motor skills also are common precursors of learning disabilities in some children. Parents of children diagnosed with LD often describe their child's clumsiness in learning to walk, run, jump, skip, ride a tricycle, catch or throw a ball, and simply move around their environment without stumbling or bumping into things. Delayed fine motor control may be manifested as difficulty in learning to dress and undress, handle buttons or zippers, manipulate eating utensils, or handle a pencil or crayon. These problems become more evident in school-related activities as children have difficulty with working puzzles, building objects, or completing art projects that require cutting with scissors and coloring with crayons or paint brushes. It shows up as slowness in learning to print letters accurately. Handwriting may seem laborious, sloppy, and nearly illegible due to poorly formed alphabet letters and spacing between characters. However, it should be emphasized again that LD is only one of several possible diagnoses to consider when a child exhibits these problems.

Visual and auditory perception or processing. Students with learning disabilities often exhibit limitations in auditory and/or visual perception and processing skills. These modalities are important avenues for learning and academic success. These are not deficits in the ability to hear or in auditory acuity. Neither are these problems with eyesight and visual acuity. These students can see and hear, but the problem lies in the actual neurological processing of input from one or both sensory modalities.

Phonological awareness is a particularly crucial skill related to reading. This involves the ability to recognize that words are composed of individual sounds blended together. Some children with LD have great difficulty recognizing and isolating these separate distinctive sounds in a word. Other key auditory perception/processing subskills affecting reading ability include: (a) auditory discrimination (ability to hear differences in sounds), (b) auditory memory (ability to store and recall what one has heard), (c) auditory sequencing (ability to remember the order of items in a sequential list such as the alphabet, numbers, days of the week, etc.), and (d) auditory blending (combining single phonic elements or phonemes into a complete word). Children who show deficits in these auditory functions may be at risk for learning disabilities.

Visual perception involves the identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory input, which are important processes as children learn to read. Problems with visual perception processes may be another indicator of risk for a diagnosis of LD and/or difficulties in acquiring literacy skills. This includes: (a) visual discrimination of letters, words, and other visual images, (b) figure-ground discrimination (difficulty distinguishing an object from its surrounding background), (c) visual closure (ability to recognize or identify an object when the total stimulus is not presented), (d) letter or object recognition (ability to recognize or distinguish geometric shapes, alphabet letters or other entities such as a square versus triangle, letter c versus g, dog versus cat, or a particular face), and (e)

visual memory (the ability to remember information that was received via the visual modality). Abilities of kindergarten-age children in these prerequisite skills are strong predictors of later reading achievement.

Attention and ability to concentrate. Some children diagnosed with LD also manifest behaviors related to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. ADHD may be concurrent with LD, but it is not considered a problem directly caused by learning disabilities. While young children are expectedly very active and energetic, excessive activity and an inability to quiet down sufficiently for a story or focused activity may be warning signs. Such behaviors are especially disruptive to learning if they are continuous, extreme, and do not seem to lessen when the environment or activity changes. These are children whose parents complain that they don't listen or pay attention. When parents or other caregivers find it difficult to get a child to settle down or sit quietly long enough to complete an age-appropriate task, there is cause for concern. This is especially true if the behaviors do not change over time, even accelerate in frequency and severity, and the child actually seems unable to focus upon a task or shift from an active to a quiet activity requiring more concentration.

Acquisition of pre-literacy skills. A lack of appropriate kindergarten readiness skills and verbal **language** abilities when children enter school can be indicators of risk for disorders that affect academic progress and achievement including a learning disability. Limitations in the developmental areas previously described all affect **literacy** and contribute to learning problems that affect a child's ability to read, write, spell, or do **mathematical** calculations. The relationship of language skills to reading achievement and reading disabilities is well established. Strong oral vocabulary skills (both expressive and receptive) are crucial skills for both reading and general academic success. Key readiness skills that reliably and robustly predict reading failure or success for most children include phonological awareness and manipulation skills (e.g., rhyming, blending, segmenting, letter knowledge, vocabulary, short-term memory for language, knowledge-related information, and rapid automatic naming). Other predictors of reading ability include letter knowledge and identification, word recognition, story recall, sentence imitation, and overall verbal ability. In fact, verbal abilities at ages 2–4 years have been well correlated, not only with eventual reading achievement itself, but also with the set of kindergarten skills shown to differentiate at risk from not-at-risk kindergarteners. Preschoolers with early language impairments are very likely to exhibit reading difficulties in their school years. Research also suggests that youngsters exhibiting delays or weaknesses in one or more of these skills described above at the end of the first grade are unlikely to become good readers. First grade reading ability has been shown to be a strong predictor of a variety of eleventh grade measures of reading ability even when measures of cognitive ability are all partialled out. Such children may be candidates for a later diagnosis of learning disability. Reading difficulties, of course, are the most frequent type of LD found in school-age students (Conference on Emergent and Early Literacy:

Current Status and Research Directions, 2001; McCardle, Scarborough, and Catts, 2001).

In summary, research clearly shows the benefits of early identification and **early intervention** with young children who are at risk for disability, poor academic performance, and school failure. The challenge is identifying these children so interventions can be initiated to address their difficulties. Parents or other primary caregivers who spend significant time with these children also need support so they can facilitate their child's learning and promote optimal development. Some argue against spending time pursuing an illusive and perhaps difficult formal diagnosis such as "learning disabilities" if this prevents timely interventions from occurring. Others caution against waiting until a formal and accurate diagnosis can be made, using the "wait and see approach" (sometimes called "wait and fail approach"), since withholding interventions until problems increase can compound into significant skill deficits. It is especially important to focus attention on the developmental delays and irregularities that are potential risk indicators known to be correlated with the disability or other learning problems. What children need during their early childhood years are early childhood professionals, including but not limited to those from the field of **early childhood special education**, who can work together with children's families to identify environmental conditions and forms of instruction that are responsive to these specific problems. Young children identified with learning disabilities may need specific therapeutic interventions in their natural everyday routines couched in age-appropriate activities that help them progress developmentally and acquire essential skills for emerging **literacy** and academic success. *See also* Academics; Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; Kindergarten; Parents and Parent Involvement.

Further Readings: Conference on Emergent and Early Literacy: Current Status and Research Direction (2001). *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice* (Special Issue) 16(4), 183–258; Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington DC: National Academy Press; Lerner, J. W., and A. Chen (1992). The cross-cultural nature of learning disabilities: A profile in perseverance. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice* 8, 147–149; Lerner, J. W. with F. Kline (2006). *Learning disabilities and related disorders: Characteristics and teaching strategies*. 10th ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company; McCardle, P., H. S. Scarborough, and H. W. Catts (2001). Predicting, explaining, and preventing children's reading difficulties. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice* 16(4), 230–239; Scruggs, T. E., and M. A. Mastropieri (2002). On babies and bathwater: Addressing the problems of identification of learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly* 25(3), 155–168; Swanson, H. L., K. R. Harris, and S. Graham, eds. (2003). *Handbook of learning disabilities*. New York: Guilford Press; Tsuge, M. (2001). Learning disabilities in Japan. In D. Hallahan and B. Keogh, eds., *Research and global perspectives in learning disabilities: Essays in honor of William M. Cruickshank*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, pp. 255–272.

Web Sites: Learning Disabilities (LD), <http://www.ldonline.org>; International Academy for Research on Learning Disabilities (IARLD), <http://www.iarld.net>. See IRLD journal *Thalamus*

Literacy

Emergent Literacy—Theory, Practice, and Policy

With the introduction and widespread acceptance of literacy standards and goals starting in the 1990s, young children's literacy development has garnered a great deal of attention on the part of policymakers, researchers, educators, and families. The majority of states across the United States, and some countries internationally (such as the United Kingdom), have adopted early literacy expectations and goals for children at discrete age levels during the preschool and primary grade years. For example, California recently adopted preschool literacy standards that are aligned with the state's **kindergarten** language arts standards. These standards cover early literacy elements such as oral language development, phonological awareness, literary analysis, and concepts about print. They are designed to increase teachers' attention to the forms and functions of print during children's earliest years of formal schooling, and to give children a head start on early literacy development in the primary grades.

Emergent literacy is the most widely used term for young children's beginning literacy learning and development (Teale and Sulzby, 1986). The term pertains to children's first efforts to make sense of, use, and create written language in and out of early childhood settings. The term emergent literacy most powerfully conveys the idea of literacy instruction in early childhood as tailored to children's emerging linguistic, social, cultural, and personal needs and talents. In this view of early literacy development, teachers adjust literacy materials, goals, and strategies to foster children's curiosity, discovery, play, and development in literacy-related activities. This view of literacy development is most strongly associated with the long-standing tradition in the field of early childhood of valuing a play-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum guided by caring, reflective practitioners.

Developmentally Appropriate and Culturally Responsive Literacy

Developmentally appropriate language and literacy education honors the role of play, self-discovery, children's individual interests, and individual rates of development (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997). As children's emergent literacy learning has gained attention as a critical focus in early childhood, influential researchers and teachers have argued for a developmentally appropriate early literacy framework and set of teaching practices. It is argued that young children benefit from literacy goals, materials, and strategies that are developmentally appropriate in the following ways: children's natural sense of discovery and curiosity are valued, activities are meaningful and authentic, children are encouraged to explore and play with literacy materials, children's individual rates of maturation and development are respected, and teachers are expected to play a critical role in selecting early literacy materials, curriculum, and adapting standards to match their particular children's needs and talents.

As early childhood settings both in the United States and internationally have become more culturally and linguistically diverse, the idea of developmentally

appropriate practice continuously needs to be expanded to include the ways that diversity of the world's children may approach and understand the forms and functions of written language. In terms of emergent literacy development, it is argued that conceptual frameworks and teaching practices need to be both developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive (Meier, 2000). In seeking common ground between these two ideas, emergent literacy goals and practices are grounded in young children's cultural and linguistic ways of looking at the world and using oral and written language (Delpit, 1995; Soto, 2002). For example, the selection of children's literature used in children's early literacy experiences must address children's cultural lives; children need opportunities for literacy performance that honor cultural traditions (Dyson, 2003); children benefit from literacy learning that relies on home/community literacy practices involving older siblings; and literacy needs to be tied to issues of social action and social justice.

Interplay between Literacy, Social Interaction, and Thought

Children's emergent literacy development involves an intricate interplay between thought, language, and social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). In a Vygotskian framework, young children experience and learn about themselves and their worlds through playful and meaningful interactions with others and objects. As young children use and explore written language (such as books, reading, writing, dictation, poems, language experience activities) with others, both peers and adults, they learn about critical forms and functions of literacy through collaboration with others. This social process of interaction and collaboration, which can occur both in home and educational settings, fosters sophisticated mental activity involving the forms and functions of written language. In a public forum of literacy learning, children learn to work with others, understand another's point of view, and explain and describe a feeling or an experience to someone else. In this melding of social interaction and literacy, emergent literacy becomes a culturally valued activity for children within a certain group, community, or setting and thus gains in social and personal currency. Literacy learning and education becomes part of the culture of the educational setting and part of a community of speakers, readers, and writers. In this socially constructed use of literacy, children benefit from scaffolded literacy activities in which they have conversational partners (peers and adults) for talking about books, stories, writing, and other shared literacy experiences.

How children learn about the forms and functions of literacy is also tied to children's general cognitive and developmental growth. An important element of this growth involves experiencing and understanding literacy as a symbol system. Since alphabetic letters or characters in written languages symbolize or represent objects and phenomena in the world, there is an important interplay between children's ability to decode and understand these symbols and their general cognitive growth and development. Both processes reinforce and support the other. Children's literacy development progresses as children understand and use letters, words, and sentences to express and represent their ideas, feelings, observations, and experiences. This is a developmental journey that usually begins in preschool

and continues on through the primary grades. In terms of literacy practice, young children's understanding of literacy as a symbol system is supported by involvement in familiar social and language contexts grounded in talking, interacting, and playing with others.

The Oral and Written Language Transition

Emergent literacy views young children's oral and written language as intricately linked, and young children move back and forth between the two as they talk, read, and write. This often starts off with a transition for children in which they move from mostly oral language experiences to increased exposure to written language activities and materials. This involves a movement away from primarily contextualized language use (i.e., oral language in familiar settings with familiar conversational partners) to more decontextualized language use (i.e., primarily written language activities in school settings without familiar social and language supports). Before entering formal schooling, many children communicate and express themselves primarily through oral language in familiar home and community contexts and with familiar conversational partners. Traditionally, though, school and educational settings have asked young children to focus on language without the familiar oral language and social supports of home and community. In an emergent literacy framework, children are afforded access to their oral language powers and talents in order to contextualize their early literacy activities and experiences in early childhood settings. It is this very process of contextualizing language use that helps children become more familiar and successful with decontextualized language use around literacy activities.

There are several key factors that support the oral to written language transition. For instance, children need access to familiar forms and functions of nonverbal communication (gesture, face-to-face interactions, holding of objects, turntaking) and oral language (conversations, stories, narratives, jokes, riddles) as supports for understanding more distant and unfamiliar forms and functions of written language in school settings. Narrative is one important avenue that children can use to bridge oral to written language use. For example, when teachers emphasize narrative for children with disabilities, it has a strong positive influence on the meaningful literacy learning of these children (Kliewer et al., 2005). Through storytelling and interactions with stories, children use their oral language talents to make sense of books and other forms of school-valued literacy. Varied forms of social interaction is another factor that influences the transition to literacy, as peer-peer and child-adult collaboration provide an oral language foundation and scaffold for early literacy learning (Cazden and Michaels, 1986).

Summary

Young children's literacy learning is a significant international focus in early childhood as countries seek to provide a solid foundation for children's early literacy learning, later school success, and to raise overall rates of literacy achievement. Increasingly, lawmakers and policymakers have turned to literacy standards and

expectations to provide this foundation for young children's literacy learning. The framework of emergent literacy, though, cautions against a "one size fits all" approach to early literacy theory, practice, and policy. Emergent literacy advocates goals, materials, and teaching practices that support and guide the diversity of children's natural talents and abilities to talk, discover, play, and imagine as they engage in literacy activities. Children need a developmentally and culturally responsive literacy education, an integration of oral language and written language activities, and literacy practices that promote integration of children's cognitive, social, cultural, and literacy learning. The current challenge for the international early childhood community is to meld literacy theory, practice, and policy to meet the needs of all children in all learning communities. *See also* Vygotsky, Lev.

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Daniel Meier

Literacy and Disabilities

Despite a rich knowledge base on how children learn to read and write and how best to teach them, an alarming number of children with disabilities will reach adulthood having not attained literacy (Saint-Laurent, Giasson, and Couture, 1998). Factors influencing this disturbing phenomenon include home literacy environments, caregiver and teacher expectations for literacy, cognitive skills, language skills, severity and type of disability, as well as the educational curriculum. As literacy development is a lifelong process that begins at birth, even for individuals with a wide range of disabilities, is important to understand the relationship between literacy and disability.

National data on literacy for young children with disabilities are not readily accessible. Few literacy specialists have opened the door to that investigative possibility. The research available suggests that children with disabilities are arriving in the classroom having had less rich literacy experiences—both in quantity and quality—than their nondisabled peers (Saint-Laurent, Giasson, and Couture,

1998). All children with disabilities appear to be given limited access to reading, drawing, and writing materials as well as literacy instruction or intervention across the lifespan (Weikle and Hadadian, 2004). And yet, research does not support the supposition that children are “too physically, too cognitively, or too communicatively disabled to benefit from experiences with written language” (Koppenhaver et al., 1991).

The type and severity of the disability play a role in placing limitations on early and later literacy experiences. A child’s sensory, physical, cognitive, or communicative differences may limit their opportunities to explore print or engage in literacy-rich activities with family. Children with severe physical impairments, for example, have greater difficulty accessing and using print devices, such as writing instruments and keyboards. Children with visual impairments experience difficulty attending to print, and children with hearing impairments have trouble connecting sounds to that print. Intellectual impairments may also serve to slow the response to literacy events and the understanding and use of print. The presence of one or more impairments may lead some parents to lower their expectations for their children’s future reading proficiency and overall academic achievement. Others may simply lack the knowledge and resources with which to stimulate their child’s literacy skills.

Regarding the emergence of **literacy** in early childhood, children with disabilities tend to acquire emergent literacy skills at a slower rate than their same age peers (Boudreau and Hedberg, 1999). Emergent literacy delays are prevalent in children exhibiting language impairment—either as a primary disability or as a secondary disability to other conditions, such as **autism** or mental retardation. For these youngsters, delayed emergent literacy typically exists in all key areas of emergent literacy, including print awareness, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and metalinguistic awareness (1999). Thus, it is widely recognized that early intervention goals for these children should address emergent literacy in the context of overall developmental goal setting. Results of emergent literacy intervention programs reveal that children with mild impairments who are enrolled prior to six months of age achieve better outcomes than those who enter programs at later ages. Children with severe disabilities, however, exhibit consistent gains regardless of age initiation in a literacy intervention program (Weikle and Hadadian, 2004).

Children with speech and language impairments appear to be at risk for having difficulties using written language, because oral language lays the foundation for all subsequent language learning, especially reading (Boudreau and Hedberg, 1999). Children with language impairments when compared to their typically developing peers have demonstrated poorer performance on tasks measuring knowledge of rhyme, letter names, and concepts related to print. While the nature of the speech and language impairment appears to be an important factor in predicting later reading achievement, there is wide variability in reading achievement among these children. For example, some children with phonological impairments in preschool have developed reading disabilities and some have not. Children exhibiting language deficits in the areas of vocabulary and grammar are placed at highest risk for reading disabilities; at a lower risk are children exhibiting only

articulation disorders (Catts, 1993). Boudreau and Hedberg (1999) found deficits in **narrative** discourse related to syntax and semantics, supporting an earlier finding that vocabulary and grammar measures at age 4 are predictive of reading achievement at age 8 (Catts, 1993). Measures of metalinguistic abilities, including phonological awareness skills, are the best predictors of reading achievement (1993), which puts children with a variety of communication disorders at high risk for reading disability.

Weikle and Hadadian (2004) report that children with disabilities experience literacy at a much lower level than their nondisabled peers, suggesting that the needs of their disability may compete for primary therapeutic and educational focus. For instance, a child with severe **cerebral palsy** (CP) may require increased assistance with gross motor and fine motor tasks, decreasing caregiver or teacher attention on the child's need for improvement in literacy skills. Research also reports that home reading and writing experiences of kids with severe speech impairments is limited and that children with disabilities are exposed to less books than their nondisabled peers (2004). Marvin (1994) found that children with single disabilities are equally as likely to have limited contact with print materials, reading episodes, and writing events as those children with multiple disabilities.

Among individuals with cerebral palsy (CP), between 50 and 100 percent are illiterate, depending upon the degree of physical and communicative impairment. Research reveals that individuals with severe physical disabilities may not have as many opportunities to develop literacy skills. They may lack appropriate accommodations for literacy learning opportunities. For example, body positioning equipment and **augmentative and alternative communication** (AAC) devices, such as buttons, switches, or computers, may allow an individual with severe physical disabilities to interact more appropriately with a reader or a book. Additionally, they may lack literacy instruction due to a focus on therapeutic needs. Teachers and caregivers may inadvertently place curricular focus on physical needs, gross or fine motor skills, and related activities of daily living, involuntarily limiting overall opportunities for text production in authentic literacy contexts (Weikle and Hadadian, 2004). When comparing AAC users to their nondisabled peers, there are significant differences found in the quality and quantity of literacy materials and activities. Parents of AAC users place greater priority on communication, mobility, and feeding than on literacy, while the parents of the nondisabled peers rank communication, peer relationships, and literacy as their highest priorities (Light and Kelford-Smith, 1993).

In children with hearing loss, literacy development frequently is delayed in the early years; but in later years, these children tend to develop basic levels of literacy. Children with hearing loss were once supposed to need to develop reading readiness through an oral or sign language. Teachers once focused primarily on these aspects of their **curriculum**. However, that fallacy is now being addressed in U.S. classrooms. Teachers are recognizing that good speaking and or signing skills are not necessarily a prerequisite to literacy learning and that reading and writing can be an effective means of communication as well as an efficient facilitator of overall language growth in all children, particularly those with disabilities (Weikle and Hadadian, 2004).

Early and ongoing home experiences with literacy also play a critical role in literacy outcomes for children with disabilities. Parents' perceptions and expectations of future literacy may be lower for these children than for their nondisabled peers. Additionally, children with disabilities may not respond to reading activities in the same manner that their nondisabled peers do. For example, a one-year-old girl who has limited upper body movement may not consistently point to the pictures in a book as her parent reads to her. One would expect a child at her age to be able to listen to simple stories, participate in rhymes and finger plays, and point to pictures in a book when named. However, when this child fails to respond like her typically developing peers, parents will unintentionally reduce regular interactions with books. Lowered expectations combined with reduced responsiveness to literacy events may unwittingly engage families in a cycle of less frequent book exposure, lowered literacy expectations, self-doubt, and a pattern of learned helplessness with regard to literacy and overall achievement (Weikle and Hadadian, 2004).

Children with disabilities who have achieved high levels of literacy relate several shared characteristics among their parents. Foremost, their parents believed themselves to be important teachers in their child's life. These parents frequently served as literate models, reading aloud regularly to their children. As adults, these children with disabilities reported that their parents created time to interact with them as literate individuals, providing reading and writing materials for the children to use. The priorities that parents hold with regard to their child's needs play a significant role in determining literacy outcomes. Parents who rank physical priorities high, such as mobility and feeding, place a lower priority on communication and literacy. Parents of nondisabled children rank communication, making friends, and literacy experiences as their highest priorities (Light and Kelford-Smith, 1993).

Older children with disabilities have traditionally been excluded from the literate community of classroom learners, due much in part to teacher expectations and curricular focus. Kliever (1998) described the three literacy participation styles imposed by teachers within both inclusive and self-contained classrooms—citizens, squatters, and aliens in the literate community. Citizens in the literate community have two things in common: first, "they are valued as symbolic beings, not devalued as intellectually deficient, and secondly, it was recognized that they needed a tool for connecting symbolically with the wider community" (Kliever, 1998, p. 177). Kliever's study revealed that teacher practices in literacy inclusion play a significant role in either encouraging or limiting literacy attainment for students with disabilities. Most of the students observed in his ethnographic study were relegated to either the position of the *squatter* or the *alien*. The "squatter's" classroom participation in literacy events was limited to remedial practices that focus on low-level concepts or diminished subskills. The "alien," however, is separated from the literate community altogether due to idiosyncratic behaviors interpreted by the teacher as cognitive incompetence. These disturbing practices led the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies to formulate a "Literacy Bill of Rights" (see below), which states that "all persons, regardless of the extent or severity of their disabilities, have a basic right to use print" (Yoder, Erickson, and Koppenhaver, 1997).

A Literacy Bill of Rights

All persons, regardless of the extent or severity of their disabilities, have a basic right to use print. Beyond this general right, there are certain literacy rights that should be assured for all persons. These basic rights are:

- 1 The right to an opportunity to learn to read and write. Opportunity involves engagement in active participation in tasks performed with high success.
- 2 The right to have accessible, clear, meaningful, culturally and linguistically appropriate texts at all times. Texts, broadly defined, range from picture books to newspapers to novels, cereal boxes, and electronic documents.
- 3 The right to interact with others while reading, writing, or listening to a text. Interaction involves questions, comments, discussions, and other communications about or related to the text.
- 4 The right to life choices made available through reading and writing competencies. Life choices include, but are not limited to, employment and employment changes, independence, community participation, and self-advocacy.
- 5 The right to lifelong educational opportunities incorporating literacy instruction and use. Literacy educational opportunities, regardless of when they are provided, have potential to provide power that cannot be taken away.
- 6 The right to have teachers and other service providers who are knowledgeable about literacy instruction methods and principles. Methods include but are not limited to instruction, assessment, and the technologies required to make literacy accessible to individuals with disabilities. Principles include, but are not limited to, the beliefs that literacy is learned across places and time, and no person is too disabled to benefit from literacy learning opportunities.
- 7 The right to live and learn in environments that provide varied models of print to use. Models are demonstrations of purposeful print use such as reading a recipe, paying bills, sharing a joke, or writing a letter.
- 8 The right to live and learn in environments that maintain the expectations and attitudes that all individuals are literacy learners (Yoder, Erickson, and Koppnhaver, 1997).

The National Adult Literacy Survey (Kirsch et al., 2002) included questions requiring respondents to categorize any illness, disability, or impairments. Twelve percent of the sample population reported some illness, disability, or impairment, and when comparing their literacy proficiency levels to those of the total population, the evidence was clear. Adults with any type of disability were more likely to perform in the lowest literacy levels, and some categories of illness, disability, or impairment appeared to have a stronger correlation with very low literacy levels. For instance, adults with mental retardation exhibited the most deficient literacy levels and were four times more likely than peers to perform in the lowest level of a literacy scale. Conversely, respondents with hearing difficulties exhibited higher literacy levels than those in other categories of impairment. The smallest gap in average reading performance among categories of illness, disability, and impairment was found between those reporting hearing difficulties and the general population. On the whole, however, significantly low-literacy levels were

found among those adults with disabilities and impairments (Indicator 36, 2003). See also Disabilities, Young Children with; Parents and Parent Involvement.

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Anissa Meacham

Lowenfeld, Viktor (1903-1960)

Viktor Lowenfeld has been described as "the most influential art educator" (Chapman, 1982, p. ix) of the twentieth century, and as doing "for the drawing of children what Piaget has done for their thinking" (*Harvard Educational Review*, quoted in Michael, 1982, p. xv).

Lowenfeld arrived in the United States in 1938, having fled Austria in advance of the German invasion. While still in Europe, Lowenfeld worked with children in the Vienna School for the Blind, and had contact with Franz Cizek, an Austrian artist and educator popularly considered the "Father of Child Art." Lowenfeld lectured briefly at both Columbia and Harvard Universities before becoming a professor of psychology and founding the Art Department at Hampton Institute in Virginia. At Hampton Institute, Lowenfeld taught John Biggers, Elizabeth Catlett, and Samela Lewis, all of whom became distinguished African American artists. In 1946, after teaching for two summers at Penn State, Lowenfeld accepted a position at The Pennsylvania State University where he established a doctoral program in art education, which soon became the largest in the United States. Soon after his arrival at Penn State, Lowenfeld published his landmark text, *Creative and*

Mental Growth, a work that has been translated into multiple languages and is now available in an eighth edition, revised most recently in 1987 by W. Lambert Brittain. This, and other texts by Lowenfeld, including *Your Child and His Art* (1954), have been translated into many languages. In 1957, the National Art Education Association named Lowenfeld Art Educator of the Year. A highly charismatic teacher, Lowenfeld's students at Penn State went on to establish and teach in art education programs throughout the country, continuing his legacy and expanding his influence throughout the world.

The position that Lowenfeld articulated in *Creative and Mental Growth* maintained that children's art experiences both reflected and supported their emotional, intellectual, physical, perceptual, social, aesthetic, and creative development. Along with others of his time, Lowenfeld believed in art as a powerful, humanizing force: "The goal of art education, in Dr. Lowenfeld's words, is 'not the art itself or the aesthetic product or the aesthetic experience, but rather the child who grows up more creatively and sensitively and applies his experience in the arts to whatever life situations may be applicable'" (Michael, 1982, p. xix).

Lowenfeld also described a series of six developmental stages through which all normally functioning children were thought to progress, given appropriate encouragement and opportunity. This developmental structure indicated what parents and teachers should expect of children at various ages, and provided a sense of what children were striving to achieve in their drawings as they progressed to subsequent stages. Lowenfeld recommended a method of teaching that encouraged children to develop their own ways of using materials and media, and focused on the enhancement of ideas and impressions through motivational dialogues, in which teachers asked children questions designed to activate their passive knowledge of important experiences in their lives. Frequently criticized in recent times as being too narrowly focused on self-expression, this approach to teaching was designed to heighten sensitivity to the environment and to children's experiences within it.

Albert Einstein remarked, "In Lowenfeld's work a fine sense of understanding, systematic spirit and unprejudiced research are combined" (Michael, 1982, p. xv). Lowenfeld died in State College, Pennsylvania, in 1960. His professional papers and collection of drawings are housed in the Archives of the Pennsylvania State University libraries. *See also* Piaget, Jean.

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Christine Marmé Thompson

Luria, A. R. (1902–1977)

Alexander Romanovich Luria was a twentieth-century Russian psychologist of the sociohistorical school of thinking. A friend and colleague of L.S. Vygotsky, Luria continued and furthered the premises of the sociohistorical theoretical perspective after Vygotsky's premature death in 1934, adapting his work to the political and historical circumstances of twentieth-century life in the then U.S.S.R.

At the core of his research was the goal of understanding the nature of human development as a function of the social resources and historical circumstances of individuals as well as groups of people.

Luria's professional training was in psychology and medicine. He studied memory, attention, language and thought, mental retardation, brain damage, the development of fraternal and identical twins in western Russia, as well as the nature of thinking among illiterate Islamic agrarian communities in the Central Asian steppes of the early 1930s. He combined his talents and interest in the biological and neurological aspects of child and adult development with his vision for understanding development against the backdrop of historical and cultural circumstances. His goals were ambitious and broad. He lived long enough and wrote extensively about these ideas in ways that contemporary psychology and neurosciences have begun to address in recent years, particularly in a way that relates to the work of early childhood development.

Theory of Development

Luria's work, along with that of L.S. Vygotsky and A. Leont'ev, paved the way for a revolutionary view of development: one that reconciled the nature of the human brain (neuropsychology), along with mental development (psychology) across time (history), in the great variety of social and cultural circumstances (anthropology). Luria and his colleagues established three premises to this view of development that he refined over five decades of his career (Cole, 1996, p. 108).

Mediation. Development for humans is marked by the ability to create and use tools to reorganize one's interactions with others and objects. By tools, Luria and his colleagues were not only referring to objects, but more importantly, tools of the mind, namely language. Luria researched how language provides a currency for thinking, reflecting, planning, and formulating new possibilities for ourselves and others.

Historical Development. As humans, we do not "start from scratch" in development over a lifetime but rather each generation benefits from the ideas and tools of the preceding generation as they are passed on in circumstances for which the culture arranges.

Practical Activity. Understanding mental activity requires studying the particulars of daily activities of those we care to understand: both their interactions with one another over time, and how they use tools—objects and various forms of language—to get their work done.

Luria pioneered a methodology for empirical research that differed from experimental psychology with control and experimental groups but was no less rigorous. His studies of adults and children began with careful observation and documentation of their actions and talk in everyday situations followed by planned interventions attempting to remediate, or reorganize, their interactions with the

world of objects and people. He then looked for evidence in his subject's responses that indicated what was amenable to change: cultural, physiological, or biological. Close observation followed interventions as he sought to document how, if at all, a person's activity was reorganized and changed as a result of the intervention.

Relevance of Luria's Work for Contemporary Early Childhood Education

Luria's work is important in contemporary educational and psychological research related to understanding the development of young children and their families from diverse backgrounds. His work reminds us to (1) seek to understand children and families from close-up involvement with them as participant observers, not arms, length detached "testing" of them; (2) understand children and their families from the premises of the important activities in their home and school life and the historical meaning of those tasks for the family and community; (3) observe closely for the tools and resources children and families use to accomplish their tasks and how they use them; (4) study closely how they make use of help and ideas offered in interventions, tracking the reorganization of their thinking from before to after to understand how people change and grow, and how the intervention might have influenced the course of that development.

Luria's work provides rich and carefully crafted empirical studies that were groundbreaking at the beginning of the twentieth century, and equally so in the twenty-first century.

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Gillian D. McNamee

M

Malaguzzi, Loris (1920–1994)

Loris Malaguzzi was founder of the public system of preschools and infant-toddler centers in Reggio Emilia, Italy. A tirelessly innovator and influential thinker, he placed great value on practice, both for the transformation of theory and in turn the generation of new ideas.

Malaguzzi was born on February 23, 1920, in Correggio in the Emilia Romagna region of northern Italy. He moved with his family to the nearby city of Reggio Emilia in 1923, when his father assumed a post as railway stationmaster. He married in 1944 and had one son, Antonio, who became an architect. Malaguzzi traveled to many places throughout his life on behalf of early childhood education, but he remained a loyal citizen of Reggio Emilia until his death on January 30, 1994.

As a young man in wartime Italy, Malaguzzi taught elementary school in Sologno, a village in the Appennines (1939–1941) and both elementary and middle school in Reggio Emilia (1942–1947). In the meanwhile, he completed an educational degree from the University of Urbino (1946) and threw his energies into supporting the cooperative preschool movement that sprang up just after the Second World War. This movement involved the enormous efforts of women's groups as well as other citizens and carried into the early seventies, when other cities with politically progressive administrations opened municipal preschools. Inspired by ideas of (among others) John Dewey, Friedrich Froebel, Freinet, and his contemporary, Bruno Ciari, an influential activist in the city of Bologna who unfortunately died young, Malaguzzi became prominent in the progressive political circles then actively transforming Italian thinking about education and schooling. In 1951, after completing a six-month specialization course in the first Italian school psychology program at the Center for National Research in Rome, he became Director of Children's Psycho-Pedagogical Services for Reggio Emilia. In 1963, when the first official city preschool was established, he was named Director of Early Childhood Programs, a post he held for thirty years.

In the late 1960s and all during the 1970s, Malaguzzi worked with colleagues to expand the system of family-centered public early care and education programs serving children under age 6, including children with disabilities. He led the city in establishing preschool regulations that included the provision of two teachers (a coteaching team) within each classroom, as well as a special studio (*atelier*) within each school staffed by a teacher (*atelierista*) with a degree in the visual arts. These two innovations, along with continuous study and reflection on the daily experience of children (the strategy of educational **documentation**), contributed to the development of a distinctive and innovative system of early childhood pedagogy and organization now known as the **Reggio Emilia Approach**. Malaguzzi believed that creativity is a characteristic way of thinking and responding and that the growth of knowledge involves increasing the power of imagination. The adult's role is to discover and nurture all children's "expressive, communicative, and cognitive languages," sometimes referred to as children's multiple **symbolic languages**. Indeed, the 100 Languages of Children is the name of the exhibit conceptualized and designed by Malaguzzi and colleagues in the early 1980s, and that, in several successive editions, has carried the message about young children's potential and rights to many countries in the world and more than thirty-eight states of the United States.

Malaguzzi was a charismatic leader and powerful communicator. He founded Italy's National Organization for the Study and Support of Early Childhood Education, still active today, and in the 1970s and 1980s served as director of the educational magazine *Zerosix* (later called *Bambini*). As his ideas reached larger and wider audiences, the influence and significance of the Reggio Emilia experience increased. *Newsweek* magazine (December 2, 1991) rated Reggio Emilia as having the "best preschools in the world," and Malaguzzi began to receive many awards and recognitions, including the Lego Prize in Denmark (1992), the Kohl Prize in Chicago (1993), the Hans Christian Andersen Prize (1994), the Mediterranean Association of International Schools Prize (1995), the Gold Medal awarded by the President of the Italian Republic (2001), and the Nonino Prize (2002). In 1996, two years after his death, his long-time colleague Susanna Mantovani organized a conference in Malaguzzi's honor at the University of Milan called *Nostalgia del Futuro* (Nostalgia of the Future). Speakers came from all over Europe and the United States to address his influence and the legacy of his ideas. In 2006, Reggio Emilia dedicated the International Loris Malaguzzi Center "to the future, to different cultures, to ideas, hopes, and imagination."

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Lella Gandini

Mann, Horace (1796–1859)

While Thomas Jefferson provided important discussions on public education and developments in European education had their immediate impact on public education in the United States, Horace Mann deserves particular credit for both establishing the American system of public education and devising its basic aims in the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1837, when asked to head the newly formed Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann was a lawyer and rising star in Massachusetts politics. From his college days, Mann had been an idealist with a religiously inspired yearning to serve and reform. And so, with service and reform in mind, Mann forsook his promising careers in law and politics for the uncertainties of a career in education.

For a little over a decade, Mann used the office of head of the Massachusetts board to reflect on what public education in the United States should mean and to lead a reform movement to establish a system that would support public education. Each year, as head of the board, Mann issued his annual reports on the state of public education in Massachusetts. By the 1850s, those reports became a blueprint and motive for making public education compulsory.

Mann defined the American public school in ways that still apply (Cremin, 1957). First, public schools meant schools for all. Public schools were to be excellent and inclusive so as to successfully compete with private institutions and thus to become the great equalizer in society. Moreover, for Mann, public schools were to be the main instruments for curing society's ills and for molding a diverse population into one common, American character defined by a common set of values.

Mann's commitment to creating inclusive schools was no less a commitment than that of the most ardent proponents of inclusion today. However, the arguments he gave then were quite different from those given today—because the context was different. Aside from diversity in social and economic class, diversity in the 1840s meant sectarian diversity within Christianity, the main groupings being Calvinists and non-Calvinists, Protestants and Catholics. It is easy for us today to ignore these categories or treat them as being trivial compared to the categories that define diversity today. However, for the American populace in the 1840s, these categories mattered every bit as much as do those used today to define diversity.

For Mann, as for many in contemporary American society, the hope and aim of public education was and is to help children learn to function well as citizens in a diverse society where group differences are respected even as common values are practiced. Therefore, for Mann, public education meant a *moral* education needed to develop children into good citizens, citizens who would insure that the new republic would thrive.

Mann also championed a broad view of public education. For Mann, public education meant liberal arts education, an education that went beyond a narrow definition of education in terms of apprenticeships and education for specific vocations. Mann's view was that all children, not just the children of the rich, should know great literature, be trained in math and science, and have experience with the arts (especially singing). In addition, all children should be taught how to live a healthy life.

But Mann was more than a moralist and idealist. He was also a practical man—as shown in the way he promoted a system that would grow and sustain his vision of public schools. That system included central oversight at the state level—to insure that local leaders did not shortchange schools to appease taxpayers. However, the heart of the system was local involvement in schools and providing training for carefully screened teachers.

Regarding local involvement, Mann argued tirelessly against selfish views of property and for views rooted in his own Unitarian Christian theology. He argued that property should be thought of as on loan to us for the purpose of caring for our neighbors, not just ourselves, and for caring for future generations as well. For Mann, our taxes and time helping local schools are sacred obligations. Mann's arguments helped establish a system of local control and oversight of schools that is still a cornerstone of American public education today.

With respect to teachers, Mann argued against the prevailing view that anyone can teach and that teaching need not require special training. Mann saw teaching as one of the most demanding professions. For Mann, not only must teachers know their subject matter, they must also know pedagogy. Furthermore, teachers must be persons with exemplary moral character, for their character serves as the mirror in front of which children practice how to behave.

Horace Mann provided American society with a new vision of public schooling, one that to a certain extent defines much in contemporary understanding of what we should mean by public education and public schools, at least with regard to essentials. Those essentials include a commitment to public education for all and to a broad and liberal education that promotes knowledge, character, and physical health. They also include local involvement and oversight of schools and having a core of trained teachers with exemplary character.

Horace Mann, and the reform movement he led, began a cycle that would become a recurrent theme in the history of American public education (Katz, 1968). Mann's idealism, his optimistic faith in the power of public schools to perfect humans and cure society's ills, led to reform but it also led eventually to disillusionment and disengagement as Mann's assumptions proved wrong. Mann assumed that all groups, including diverse groups of working class families, would welcome the kind of education he was promoting. By the 1860s, it was clear that many groups experienced compulsory public schooling as defined by Mann as an imposition, not as a means to develop and succeed. Mann's optimistic vision did not, then, match the reality and complexity of American pluralistic society.

Today, American educators wrestle with this same issue of matching a progressive, idealistic vision of public education to the complex reality of American society—particularly to the reality that families differ significantly in what they

want and do not want from public schooling. Mann's legacy lies, then, more in his defining an ideal than in his providing the details needed to realize that ideal.

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W. George Scarlett

Maslow, Abraham (1908–1970)

Personality theorist Abraham Harold Maslow is best known for his contributions to the humanistic psychology movement, most notably his *Hierarchical Theory of Motivation*. Credited with cofounding the humanistic movement (along with Carl Rogers), Maslow conceptualized motivation as the human tendency to strive for a rewarding and meaningful life. Early childhood educators, who traditionally concerned themselves with children's affective development, found important support for their point of view in Maslow's theory.

Maslow was born in Brooklyn, New York, to Jewish immigrant parents. Isolated as a child, in part due to his mother's mental illness, Maslow grew up in libraries among books. Not well educated himself, his father pressured his eldest son to attend law school. After a short-lived attempt to comply, Maslow next attended Cornell University and later the University of Wisconsin, where he obtained formal training in psychology (B.A. 1930; M.A. 1931; Ph.D. 1934). Early mentors included Harry Harlow, famous for his attachment studies, and behaviorist Edward Thorndike at Columbia University, whose work had initially attracted Maslow to psychology. Maslow's excitement about behaviorism, however, subsided as he raised his two daughters—an experience that confronted him with the complexity of human behavior (Maslow, 1968, p. 55).

Maslow taught next at Brooklyn College in New York City where he came into contact with distinguished European scholars, many of whom had fled Nazi Germany. Luminaries Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Max Wertheimer, and Erich Fromm numbered among those who shaped Maslow's intellectual growth during this period and laid the groundwork for his later humanistic views. In 1951, Maslow accepted an appointment to chair the Psychology Department at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. Here he remained for the duration of his career. His influential book *Toward a Psychology of Being* was published in 1962.

Maslow's *Hierarchy of Human Needs*, a pyramid-shaped diagram with self-actualization at the apex, proposed that human motivation can be understood as a life quest toward fulfillment. However, basic human needs must be sufficiently well met before one could conceivably express one's unique potential. Each level of Maslow's hierarchy described these basic needs in terms of psychological tensions that one must resolve in order to move toward self-actualization. First, one's

physiological needs must be met; *safety* needs form the second layer, followed by *love and belongingness* needs at the third. As one travels toward the top of the pyramid, the need for *esteem* and, finally, for *actualization* emerge. Those rare few who achieve self-actualization may also experience *transcendence*, a state of being where one becomes ecstatically aware of human potential in the cosmic sense. This heightened awareness, although joyous, also creates profound sadness, for, in understanding human potential in its grandest sense, one must also confront human frailty and the undeniable human tendency to bungle opportunities for growth.

Maslow's optimistic view of personality development held that children will grow in a positive direction so long as their legitimate needs are sufficiently well met. Under the right circumstances, desirable qualities of self-direction, openness to experience, trust in one's abilities, and, ultimately, creativity will emerge, allowing the self-enhancing individual to contribute constructively and harmoniously to group life. Maslow's personality theory represented a contemporary rendering of ideas introduced into early childhood education years before by Jean-Jacques **Rousseau's** and Friedrich **Froebel's** similar philosophies of development "unfolding" across the life span.

In the spring of 1969, Maslow took a leave of absence from Brandeis College to become a resident fellow of the W. P. Laughlin Charitable Foundation, Menlo Park, California. Here he freely pursued his passionate interest in democracy and ethics.

On June 8, 1970, at the age of 62, Abraham Maslow, having suffered a history of chronic heart disease, died of a heart attack. *Abraham H. Maslow: A Memorial Volume*, compiled with the assistance of his wife and high school sweetheart, Bertha Goodman Maslow, was published posthumously in 1972.

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Ann C. Benjamin

Mathematics

The turn of the century has seen a dramatic increase in attention to the mathematics education of young children, for at least five reasons. First, increasing numbers of children attend early care and education programs. Second, there is an increased recognition of the importance of mathematics for individuals and society. Third, there is a substantial knowledge gap in the mathematics performance of U.S. children living in economically deprived communities (Griffin, Case, and Siegler, 1994; Saxe, Guberman, and Gearhart, 1987). Fourth, researchers have changed from a position that young children have little or no knowledge of or capacity to learn, mathematics to one that acknowledges competencies that are either innate or develop by or before the pre-K years. Fifth and finally, research indicates that knowledge gaps appear in large part due to the lack of connection

between children's informal and intuitive knowledge and school mathematics, and especially due to the poor development of this informal knowledge in some children (Baroody and Wilkins, 1999; Ginsburg and Russell, 1981; Hiebert, 1986). As these reasons suggest, positions regarding young children and mathematics have changed considerably over the years. Early childhood professionals increasingly acknowledge that better mathematics education can and should begin early. Even preschoolers show a spontaneous interest in mathematics. Caring for them well, in any setting, involves nurturing and meeting their intellectual needs, which includes needs for mathematical activity.

Research on mathematics has played a central role in contributing to these changing attitudes and understandings. For example, very young children are sensitive to mathematical situations and thus all have the potential to become mathematically literate. Research has demonstrated that babies in the first six months of life can discriminate one object from two, and two objects from three (Antell and Keating, 1983). This was determined via a *habituation* paradigm in which infants "lose interest" in a series of displays that differ in some ways, but have the same number of objects. For example, say that infants are shown a sequence of pictures that contain a small set of objects, such as two circular regions. The collections differ in attributes such as size, density, brightness, or color, but there are always two objects. The differences between successive pictures initially keep infants' attention—they continue to look at each picture in turn. Eventually, however, they *habituate* to the displays; for example, they begin to look at the screen less, and their eyes wander. Then they are shown a collection of three circular regions that are similar in attributes to those they had previously seen and their eyes focus intently on this new collection. Thus, the researchers know that they are sensitive in some way to *number*. This empirically established insight has convinced many that young children can engage with substantive mathematical ideas.

These changing understandings of young children and mathematics have not been without controversy, however. Over the course of the twentieth century, research on mathematics moved from a cautious assessment of the number competencies of children entering school, to a Piagetian position that young children were not capable of true numeric thinking, to the discovery of infant sensitivity to mathematical phenomenon, to the present debate about the meaning of these contradictions and an attempt to synthesize apparently opposing positions. The last phase includes a paradox: studies contradicted Piagetian positions on children's lack of ability, but supported the basic constructivist Piagetian framework. That framework has been so influential that even substantive new theories were borne in reaction to it. For example, significant experiences are often those produced by the child's own actions, including mental actions. Further, children can and do invent concepts and strategies, and, even when incorrect, exhibit intelligence. Their search for patterns is fundamentally mathematical in nature. As a specific example of the paradox, Jean **Piaget** was incorrect in claiming that early number knowledge was meaningless. Piaget was, however, accurate in describing children's construction of logicomathematical knowledge that is increasingly general and that eventually compels children to make warranted generalizations resistant to confounding by distracting perceptual cues.

Recent debates are among three theoretical frameworks for understanding young children's mathematical thinking: empiricism, (neo) nativism, and interactionism. In traditional empiricism, the child is seen as a "blank slate," truth lies in correspondences between children's knowledge and reality, and knowledge is received by the learner via social transmission or abstracted from repeated experience with a separate ontological reality. An extension, traditional information processing theory, uses the computer as a metaphor for the mind and moves slightly toward an interactionist perspective. In contrast, nativist theories, in the tradition of philosophical rationalism (e.g., Plato and Kant), emphasize the inborn, or early developing, capabilities of the child. For example, quantitative or spatial cognitive structures present in infancy support the development of later mathematics, and thus innate structures are fundamental to mathematical development. In this view, a small number of innate and/or early-developing mathematical competencies are privileged and easy to learn. These are hypothesized to have evolutionary significance and be acquired or displayed by children in diverse cultures at approximately the same age. Neither the empiricist nor nativist position fully explains children's learning and development. An intermediate position appears warranted, such as interactionist theories that recognize the interacting roles of nature and nurture. In interactionist, constructivist theories, children actively and recursively create knowledge. Structure and content of this knowledge are intertwined and each structure constitutes the organization and components from which the child builds the next, more sophisticated, structure (Clements and Sarama, in press-a).

Research from these positions reveals a picture of young children who possess an informal knowledge of mathematics that is surprisingly broad, complex, and sophisticated (Kilpatrick, Swafford, and Findell, 2001). In both play and instructional situations, even preschoolers can engage in a significant level of mathematical activity. In free play, they explore patterns and shapes, compare magnitudes, and count objects. Less frequently, they explore dynamic changes, classify, and explore spatial relations. Importantly, this is true for children regardless of income level and gender (Seo and Ginsburg, 2004). In a similar vein, most entering kindergartners, and even entering preschoolers, show a surprising high entry level of mathematical skills. For example, most entering kindergartners can count past ten, compare or relate quantities, read numerals, recognize shapes, make patterns, and use nonstandard units of length to compare objects. As mentioned, these capabilities are well established by most entering kindergartners from middle- and high-income, but by a smaller proportion of children from low-income communities. Research has shown, however, that high-quality mathematics curricula (see **Curriculum, Mathematics**) can help children from low-resource communities develop mathematical concepts and skills (see **Interagency Education Research Initiative [IERI]**, as well as Clements and Sarama, in press-b). Without intervention, many of these children later have trouble in mathematics and then school in general. With support, most primary grade children can construct surprisingly sophisticated and abstract concepts and strategies in each of these topical areas.

Number and operations is arguably the most important of the main concepts that should be developed in the early childhood years because (1) numbers

can be used to tell us how many, describe order, and measure; they involve numerous relations, and can be represented in various ways; and (2) operations with numbers can be used to model a variety of real-world situations and to solve problems; they can be carried out in various ways.

Early numerical knowledge associated with these concepts has four interrelated aspects: instantly recognizing and naming how many items of a small configuration (“subitizing”; e.g., “That’s two crackers.”), learning the list of number words to at least ten, enumerating objects (i.e., saying number word in correspondence with objects), and understanding that the last number word said when counting refers to how many items have been counted. Children learn these four aspects initially by different kinds of experiences, but they gradually become more connected. Indeed, having children represent their quantitative concepts in different ways, such as with objects, spoken words, and numerals, and connecting those representations, are important aspects of all mathematics. Each of the four aspects begins with the smallest numbers and gradually includes larger numbers. Seeing how many, or subitizing, ends at three to five items and moves into decomposing/composing where small numbers are put together to see larger numbers as patterns. Like all mathematical knowledge, knowledge of number develops qualitatively. For example, as children’s ability to subitize grows from perceptual, to imagined, to numerical patterns, so too does their ability to count and operate on collections grows from perceptual (counting concrete objects), to imagined (with six hidden objects and two shown, saying, “Six . . . seven, eight! Eight in all!”), to numerical (counting number words, as in “ $8 + 3?$ 9 is 1, 10 is 2, 11 is 3 . . . 11!”).

Regarding operations, even toddlers notice the effects of increasing or decreasing small collections by one item. Children can solve problems such as six and two more as soon as they can accurately count. Children who cannot yet count-on often follow three steps: counting objects for the initial collection of six items, counting two more items, and then counting the items of the two collections together. Children develop, and eventually abbreviate, these solution methods. For example, when items are hidden from view, children may put up fingers sequentially while saying, “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6” and then continue on, putting up two more fingers, “7, 8. Eight.” Children who can count-on simply say, “S-i-x—7, 8. Eight.” At this point, children in many parts of the world learn to count up to the total to solve a subtraction situation because they realize that it is much easier. For example, the story “Eight apples on the table. The children ate five. How many now?” could be solved by thinking, “I took away 5 from those 8, so 6, 7, 8 (raising a finger with each count), that’s 3 more left in the 8.”

After they have developed these strategies, children can be encouraged to use strategic reasoning. For example, some children go on to invent recomposing and decomposing methods using doubles ($6 + 7$ is $6 + 6 = 12$. $12 + 1$ more = 13). Primary-grade children can extend such strategies to their work with large numbers and place-value concepts. For example, they might learn first to count by tens and ones to find the sum of 38 and 47, and later learn to decompose 38 into its tens and ones and 47 into its tens and ones. This encourages the children to reason with ten as a unit like the unit of one and compose the tens together into 7 tens, or 70. After composing the ones together into 15 ones, they have transformed the sum into the sum of 70 and 15. To find this sum, the children

take a 10 from the 15 and give it to the 70, so the sum is 80 and 5 more, or 85. Strategies like this are modifications of counting strategies involving ten and one just like strategies for finding the sum of 8 and 7 are modifications of counting strategies involving only one (e.g., children who know that 8 and 2 are 10 take 2 from 7 and give it to 8. So, 10 and 5. 15). We know from studies of cognition in everyday life, including adults and children selling candy in the streets of Brazil, that such strategies can be invented in supportive cultures.

To develop computational methods that they understand, children benefit from experiences in kindergarten (or earlier), including hearing the pattern of repeating tens in the numbers words and relating these words to quantities grouped in ten. First graders can use quantities grouped in tens or make drawings of tens and ones to do two-digit addition with regrouping and discuss how, recording numerically their new ten: for example, $48 + 26$ makes 6 tens (from 40 and 20) and 1 ten and 4 (from $8 + 6$), so there is a total of 7 tens and 4 for 74. Children invent and learn from each other many effective methods for adding such numbers and many ways to record their methods. Second graders can go on to add 3-digit numbers by thinking of the groups of hundreds, tens, and ones involved. They can subtract (e.g., $82 - 59$) by thinking of breaking apart 82 into 59 and another number. Computers can help provide *linked* representations of objects and numerals that are uniquely helpful in supporting this learning (see **Curriculum, Technology**). Although some teachers and critics worry that calculators will interfere with such learning, research results consistently reveal that—used wisely, to further problem-solving efforts and in combination with other methods—calculator use is not harmful and can be beneficial (Groves and Stacey, 1998).

Geometry, measurement, and spatial reasoning are also important, inherently, because they involve understanding the space in which children live. Two major concepts in geometry are that geometry can be used to understand and to represent the objects, directions, locations in our world, and the relationships between them; and that geometric shapes can be described, analyzed, transformed, and composed and decomposed into other shapes. Initial knowledge of these concepts is not beyond the cognitive capabilities of young children. Very young children know and use the shape of their environment in navigation activities. With guidance, they can learn to mathematize this knowledge. They can learn about direction, perspective, distance, symbolization, location, and coordinates. Some studies have identified the primary grades as a good time to introduce learning of simple maps, such as maps of objects in the classroom or routes around the school or playground, but informal experiences in prekindergarten and kindergarten are also beneficial, especially those that emphasize building imagery from physical movement. Again, computers can help “mathematize” these experiences.

Children can learn richer concepts about shape if their educational environment includes four features: varied examples and nonexamples, discussions about shapes and their characteristics, a wider variety of shape classes, and interesting tasks. All are important, because concepts of two-dimensional shapes begin forming in the prekindergarten years and stabilize as early as age 6. Therefore, children need rich opportunities to learn about geometric figures between 3 and 6 years of age. Curricula should develop these early concepts aggressively, so that by the end

of grade three children can identify examples and nonexamples of a wide range of geometric figures; classify, describe, draw, and visualize shapes; and describe and compare shapes based on their attributes. Young children move through levels in the composition and decomposition of 2-D figures. From lack of competence in composing geometric shapes, children who are given appropriate experiences can gain abilities to combine shapes into pictures, then synthesize combinations of shapes into new shapes (composite shapes), eventually operating on and iterating those composite shapes. Helpful experiences include making pictures and solving puzzles with geometric shapes such as pattern blocks and tangram sets.

Measurement is one of the main real-world applications of mathematics. Measurement of continuous quantities involves assigning a number to attributes such as length, area, and weight. Together, number and measurement are components of quantitative reasoning. In this vein, measurement helps connect the two realms of number and geometry, each providing conceptual support to the other. Two main concepts in measurement are that comparing and measuring can be used to specify “how much” of an attribute (e.g., length) objects possess and that repeating a unit or using a tool can determine measures.

Prekindergarten children know that properties such as mass (amount), length, and weight exist, but they do not initially know how to reason about these attributes or to measure them accurately. At age 4–5 years, however, many children can, with opportunities to learn, become less dependent on perceptual cues and thus make progress in reasoning about or measuring quantities. This involves learning many concepts, including the following: the need for equal-size units; that a line segment made by joining two line segments has a length equal to the sum of the lengths of the joined segments; that a number can be assigned to a length; and that you may need to repeat, or iterate, a unit, and subdivide that unit, to find that number (to a given precision). By the end of the primary grades, children can learn relationship between units and the need for standard units, the relationship between the size and number of units, and the need for standardization of units.

Two other areas can be woven into the main three areas of number, geometry, and measurement: algebra and data analyses. Algebra begins with a search for patterns. Identifying patterns helps bring order, cohesion, and predictability to seemingly unorganized situations and allows one to recognize relationships and make generalizations beyond the information directly available. Although prekindergarten children engage in pattern-related activities and recognize patterns in their everyday environment, an abstract understanding of patterns develops gradually during the early childhood years. Children eventually learn to recognize the relationship between patterns with nonidentical objects or between different representations of the same pattern (e.g., between visual and motoric, or movement, patterns), identify the core unit (e.g., AB) that either repeats (ABABAB) or “grows” (ABAABAAAB), and then use it to generate both these types of patterns. In the primary grades, children can learn to think algebraically about arithmetic, for example, generalizing that when you add zero to a number the sum is always that number or when you add three numbers it does not matter which two you add first.

The beginning of data analysis, also accessible to young children, contains one main concept: Classifying, organizing, representing, and using information to ask and answer questions. Children can learn to classify and count to order data, then organize and display that data through both simple numerical summaries such as counts, tables, and tallies, and graphical displays, including picture graphs, line plots, and bar graphs. They can compare parts of the data, make statements about the data as a whole, and generally determine whether the graphs answer the questions posed initially. These sorts of activities can be generated in a variety of mathematics experiences as well as more integrated curriculum strategies such as the **Project Approach** or those based on the **Reggio Emilia** approach to long-term projects.

In summary, young children have the interests and ability to engage in significant mathematical thinking and learning, more so than is typically introduced in most educational or curriculum programs. Mathematical processes, such as reasoning, problem solving, and communicating, are also critical. Children, especially considering their minimal experience, are impressive mathematical problem solvers. They are learning to learn, and learning the rules of the “reasoning game.” Research on problem solving and reasoning also reveals surprising early abilities. Although the processes definitely improve, recent research claims appear valid: domain-specific knowledge is essential. However, what is then often neglected is the recognition that usually the reasoning from domain-specific knowledge simultaneously builds, and builds on, the basis of mindful general problem solving and reasoning abilities that are evident from the earliest years. *See also* Classroom Environment.

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Douglas H. Clements and Julie Sarama

Mathematics Curriculum. See Curriculum, Mathematics

Maturationism

Maturationism is a theoretical perspective that emphasizes the contribution of biological processes to children's development. Maturationists take the position that maturation (i.e., the process of growing from a genetic plan) is the central element in explaining how children grow and change. These theorists argue that a universal, invariant sequence of human development can be described and that factors within the genetic makeup of each individual determine the pace at which the sequence unfolds for that child. Maturationist theorists elevate the impact of nature (genetic inheritance) and downplay the importance of nurture (learning/experience) on children's developmental progression.

Maturationist thinking is most often associated with the work of Arnold **Gesell** and his colleagues at the Clinic of Child Development at Yale University. From its beginnings in 1911, the Clinic's project was to chart the developmental sequence of childhood from birth through ten years of age. Based on the concept of genetic predetermination (automatic unfolding of behavioral organizations as a function of innate biological structures), Gesell observed the sequence of development of thousands of children and described growth gradients that indicated norms for when developmental milestones would be reached across physical, emotional, and cognitive domains. Gesell and his colleagues are largely responsible for the considerable influence that maturationist thinking has had on parents' and teachers' understandings of child development.

The major principles of maturationist thinking represent the foundations of a perspective that has had a major impact on early childhood education theory and practice. Defining principles include the following: (a) biological processes, especially maturation of the central nervous system, are largely responsible for growth and change in human organisms, while environmental factors such as experience and instruction are thought to be of secondary importance; (b) each normal individual carries a complete set of human capacities, instincts, and drives, meaning that everything necessary is supplied by nature; (c) each normal individual goes through an orderly sequence of developmental milestones, and the sequence does not vary across individuals or groups; (d) each individual has a tailor-made genetic timetable that regulates the pace at which maturation proceeds, therefore a pre-set internal clock determines when developmental milestones will be reached; (e) the cycle of human growth is continuous and additive, so development builds on earlier development; and (f) by carefully observing the development of large numbers of children, it is possible to generate normative data that indicate when developmental milestones will be reached, and the average time when growth gradients will be accomplished can be described.

The widespread acceptance of the foregoing principles has had a significant influence on how educational researchers, policymakers, teachers, and parents think about young children's development and what that means for curriculum design, program planning, and parenting. The assumption of genetic predetermination dominated the child study field and early childhood education during the first half of the twentieth century (Hunt, 1961). Most researchers, program developers, teachers, and parents of the era believed that a child's biological inheritance essentially controlled his or her developmental progression. Environmental factors were perceived to be secondary. In Gesell's words, "No environment as such has the capacity . . . to generate the progressions of development" (Gesell, 1931, p. 211). In fact, it was widely believed that no benefit and potential harm could come from attempting to speed up children's development through instruction, practice, or pressuring children to do more than they were ready to do. The remnants of this thinking continue to have a powerful influence on early childhood education today.

The concept of "readiness" has its roots in maturationist thinking and remains an important part of early childhood discourse. **Readiness**, from the perspective of maturationist theory, refers to a point in time when an individual has reached a level of maturation that will allow him or her to learn new behaviors, skills, or concepts. Accompanying this way of thinking about readiness is the notion that expecting children to accomplish tasks for which they are not ready can cause unwarranted frustration for children and for those trying to teach them. In terms of early schooling, this translates into attempts to tailor educational experiences to match the developmental levels of children, thus allowing children to develop at their own rates and making it the job of the school to adjust to the maturation levels of the students.

Maturationists' contention that normalized patterns of child development can be described continues to dominate the thinking of many parents, pediatricians, and educators. Parents continue to measure the physical, cognitive, and social growth of their children against developmental norms established by Gesell and others. Pediatricians continue to report on young children's developmental progress in relation to normative data, so that parents are told, for example, that their child is at a given percentile for language development and so on. Program developers, teachers, and other educationists continue to design curriculum and educational activities for children based on the belief that all (or at least most) children of a certain age are at the same developmental level and have the same basic capacities and needs. The following list provides an example of growth gradients described by Gesell, Ilg, and Ames (1977, pp. 342-343) in the domain of child-child interpersonal relations.

4 years—

- Will share or play cooperatively with special friends.
- Very conversational with friends. Good imaginative play.
- But much excluding, tattling, disputing, quarreling, verbal and physical.
- More interested in children than in adults.
- May spontaneously take charge of younger or shy child.
- May have special friends of same sex.

5 years—

- Plays well with other children, especially groups kept small.

- Does not insist on having own way and does not worry about behavior of others.
- Prefers playmates of own age.
- Some are too rough, too bossy, or cry too readily to get on well in unsupervised play.
- May play better with another child outside rather than indoors.

6 years—

- Marked interest in making friends, having friends, being with friends. Uses term “school friend” or “playmate.”
- Seems able to get along with friends, but play does not hold up long if unsupervised.
- Quarreling, physical combat. Each wants own way.
- A good deal of tattletaling.
- May be very dominating and bossy with some playmates.
- Much exclusion of a third child: “Are you playing with So-and-so? Then I’m not playing with you.”
- Cannot bear to lose at games and will cheat if necessary to win. Also thinks friends cheat or do things the wrong way.
- Many are said to be a “bad influence” on playmates or are thought to play with someone who is a “bad influence.”
- May prefer slightly older playmates.

Although less common than in the past, the concept that a nursery school setting is best for young children is another legacy of maturationist thinking. Gesell, Ilg, and Ames (1977) summarized the implications of maturationist theory for educational practice in the following statement: “Parents and teachers who think that a child is so plastic that he or she can be made over by strenuous outside pressure have failed to grasp the true nature of the mind. The mind may be likened to a plant, but not to clay. For clay does not grow. Clay is molded entirely from without. A plant is primarily molded from within, through the forces of growth” (p. 12). Traditional nursery schools, which are set up more like children’s gardens than academies, are designed to provide a safe, nurturing environment that allows the natural development of children to progress at its own pace. The popularity of nursery school approaches has waned as accountability pressures on early childhood programs have increased and expectations for young children’s academic performance have escalated. Concurrent with these changes has been a gradual decline in the influence of maturationist perspectives.

Some of the limitations of maturationist theory include its inability to explain environmental effects on children’s development, its lack of attention to individual differences among children, its excessive concern with normal development, and its lack of usefulness in guiding children’s development and learning. Critics complain that maturationists’ overemphasis on biological factors ignores the impact of experience and learning, arguing that genetic inheritance alone cannot adequately explain the complex processes of human development. They also make the case that individual differences are often overlooked or stigmatized when maturationist theory is applied. Weber (1984, p. 58) uses the example of the popular film series produced by the National Film Board of Canada, which characterized particular ages such as the “Terrible Twos and Trusting Threes,” to make the point that normative concepts associated with maturationist thinking led to overgeneralizations that ignored differences in individual development. In addition, others have critiqued the lack of useful information available from just

knowing how children compare to group norms provided by maturationist scientists. Thomas (1992), for example, summarizes, "Group averages are of limited use in explaining a child's past, predicting his future status, or suggesting what should be done to guide his development" (p. 71). These limitations may help to explain why the maturationist theoretical perspective seems to have lost much of its currency in the early twenty-first century.

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J. Amos Hatch

McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership

The McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University, Wheeling, Illinois, is dedicated to enhancing the professional orientation, management skills, and leadership capacity of early childhood administrators. The activities of the center encompass four areas:

- Training to improve the knowledge base, skills, and competencies of directors who administer early childhood programs;
- technical assistance to improve program quality;
- research on key professional development issues; and
- public awareness of the critical role that directors play in the provision of quality services for children and families.

The overarching goal of the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership is to improve the quality of center-based early care and education programs and to serve as a model for the professional development of early childhood administrators. Through its training and technical assistance efforts, the Center equips directors with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to administer exemplary early childhood programs. Through its research and public awareness efforts, it serves as a voice for directors by advocating for better working conditions and compensation, supporting emerging leaders from underrepresented groups, and strengthening professional standards for early childhood personnel.

Funded by grants and contracts from philanthropic foundations, government agencies, and private corporations, the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership's initiatives are targeted to program administrators of center-based early care and education programs. This includes for-profit and nonprofit, public-sponsored and private-sponsored, and part-day and full-day programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children during their out-of-school time. Secondary audiences include supervisors, researchers, policymakers, and trainers, as well as other current and emerging leaders in the field of early childhood and related disciplines.

Some of the Center's activities include nationally recognized director-training programs such as the Head Start Leadership Training Program, Taking Charge

of Change, the Next Step Advanced Leadership Training, Coaching for Results, and Directors' Technology Training. The Center also provides training for career advisors to prepare them to mentor early childhood practitioners and for quality enhancement specialists who provide technical assistance to centers. Annually the Center hosts a leadership conference, *Leadership Connections*, for directors nationwide.

In the area of technical assistance, the Center offers organizational climate assessment using *The Early Childhood Work Environment Survey* (ECWES). Center staff also provide support for local and state quality enhancement initiatives by facilitating accreditation, assisting with the development of director credential programs, and providing technical assistance on how to use the *Program Administration Scale* (PAS) to measure and monitor the quality of leadership and management practices of center-based programs.

The Center has been a leader in providing technology support for child-care administrators including the development of Microsoft and Lotus SmartSuite technology manuals and hosting online discussion forums for early childhood administrators on its Web site (<http://cecl.nl.edu>).

Research conducted by the Center focuses on a wide range of professional development issues including the effectiveness of different training models, workforce turnover and compensation, and teacher qualifications and credentialing. To expand the public's awareness of the importance of strong leadership in early care and education, the Center publishes a quarterly newsletter *The Director's Link* and quarterly *Research Notes* in addition to periodic public policy reports on different professional development issues.

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Paula Jorde Bloom

McMillan, Margaret (1860–1931)

Margaret McMillan was an educator, teacher educator, and child and family advocate who fought for children's causes and inspired legislation on the local and national levels in England. She and her sister Rachel McMillan founded an open-air nursery that later became the internationally famous Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Training Centre. The Centre trained the majority of the first nursery school teacher-administrators in the United States. Margaret was one of the cofounders of the British Nursery School Association, and became its first president. She and Grace Owen were instrumental in the passage of the Fisher Act of 1918, giving Local Education Authorities the power to provide nursery classes or schools for children between the ages of two and five years. This act encompassed many of the ideas and beliefs that McMillan had been espousing for years, including attention to the health, nourishment, and physical welfare of young children. It set standards for the cognitive and social education of children, and the staffing and administration of nursery schools.

Margaret McMillan was born and educated in the United States. The demise of her father disrupted the family's life. Her mother returned to Scotland, taking

her children to live with their maternal grandparents. Margaret completed her schooling, and took positions as a governess and as a companion to a wealthy elderly woman. However, when her employer forced her to choose between socialism and speaking out or inheriting a large sum of money, she left the woman's employ to join in founding the Independent Labour Party. As an elected member of the Bradford School Board she visited many schools. She discovered a high level of curable diseases and malnutrition among the students. After ascertaining some causes of the problems, including lack of sunlight and fresh air, medical and dental care, she became determined to eliminate these causes of poor health in children. She and her sister founded clinics and an open air camp that later became known as the nursery school.

Margaret saw a need for revising the initial and in-service training of teachers, following her difficulty in finding appropriate teachers for her school during World War I. She decided to add a training center for those who wanted to work with disadvantaged children. One of the institution's distinctive features was a focus on understanding children's behavior through observation. Margaret's philosophical stance, that a nursery school teacher "helps to make a brain and a nervous system," finds its current expression in brain-based research and practice. Her declaration that the teacher of very young children must have "a finer perception and a wider training and outlook than is needed by any other kind of teacher" forms the foundation for today's early childhood teacher education standards in the United States.

Margaret McMillan's ideas were spread through her prolific writing, which included several editions of her book, *The Nursery School*, one with a forward by **Patty Smith Hill**. She was the recipient of numerous awards and government honors for her war and nursery school work. She died at the age of 70, a champion of the power of the environment and an advocate for the rights of the child.

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Blythe Hinitz

McMillan, Rachel (1859–1917)

Rachel McMillan's experiences during childhood and young adulthood motivated her to enter the health field and become a sanitation inspector. She learned that poor children lived, for the most part, in deplorable conditions. She enlisted

the help of her sister Margaret **McMillan** in alleviating as many of the problems as possible by advocating for such things as regular school health inspections, school baths, and nutritious school meals. As members of a socialist party, they also campaigned for women's suffrage. Rachel persuaded her sister to come to London, and together they opened a clinic in Bow in 1908 and one in Deptford in 1910. The "Baby Camp" became the Deptford Open Air Nursery. Two years later it became a nursery school staffed by "teacher-nurses." Rachel's death at the age of 58 left Margaret to carry on the work of running the Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Training Centre and advocating for young children and their families.

An important principle that governed the nursery school and its associated teacher training college was that every child should be educated "as if he were your own." A key concept was that the children should be "nurtured," which was defined as having "the all-round loving care of individuals." Another goal for the school and its teachers was to "assist parents in improving their child-rearing practices, and to develop their own potentialities." The young girls who were training to be teachers lived in the neighborhood and spent the first year of their program working at the school and making home visits in the evenings. They became friendly with the mothers and familiar with their lifestyles. This placed the nursery school work in a sociological context. The school was envisioned as a progressive influence; a research laboratory that would draw together doctors, nurses, social workers, and women of different social classes. The training college exemplified the McMillan's belief that "*preschool children should have appropriately trained well-qualified teachers.*" For this reason students took the second year of their program at the Home and Colonial College, to complete the Board of Education's requirements for a teacher training course. Both Abigail Adams **Eliot** and Edna Noble **White** studied and worked at the nursery school in the 1920s. Eliot's letters to her sponsor, Mrs. Pearson of the Women's Education Association of Boston, describe the 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. days, the schedule, and the activities. Eliot returned home to found the **Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Centre** in Boston, and White to found the Merrill-Palmer Motherhood and Home Training School, and its laboratory nursery school in Detroit.

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Blythe Hinitz

Media. See Children's Media

Mental Health

Mental health is a broad concept related to fundamental principles of psychological, social, and emotional development as they support positive child development. Principles of positive mental health underlie healthy development in all areas of early childhood development and are crucial to overall child well-being.

Likewise, when there is a problem associated with an area related to mental health, child well-being may be jeopardized. Children who have particular special needs may be especially vulnerable to mental health problems because of the nature of their developmental needs. In other words, a child's developmental pattern may lead to future mental health problems if there is not effective **early intervention**. At the same time, the context of a child's development may cause mental health problems, even when the child does not have particular special developmental needs. For example, a healthy child born to a parent with severe depression may develop particular special needs later in childhood if there is not effective intervention for the infant–parent pair.

The term “mental health” is often used in association with early childhood to refer to the social and emotional well-being of infants, toddlers, and young children. Although the term “infant mental health” is commonly used among early childhood professionals, the concept relates to principles of child development beyond infancy.

As a field of study, infant or early childhood mental health is a multidisciplinary field made up of clinicians and practitioners from a broad cross-section of the early childhood field, such as health care practitioners, psychologists, researchers, early childhood educators, and related service providers (e.g., speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and social workers). Although mental health services has a connotation of pathology based on the nature, history, and stigma of mental health, the field of infant or early childhood mental health is one that focuses on the prevention of mental health problems.

The field of infant mental health is relatively new, and its beginning is often identified with the work of Selma Fraiberg (1975) and her psychoanalytic work with impaired mother–infant relationships. Since that time, there has been growing recognition of the importance of healthy relationships and social interactions to support healthy brain development and, therefore, overall development for children. Some key organizations that support the development of mental health resources, research, and practice include the following:

- **Children's Defense Fund (CDF)**
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**
- **National Center for Children in Poverty**
- National Mental Health Association
- World Association for Infant Mental Health
- **Zero to Three**

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Web Sites: Children's Defense Fund Child Welfare and Mental Health Division, <http://www.childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/default.aspx>; National Association for the Education of Young Children, <http://www.naeyc.org/>; National Center for Children in Poverty, <http://www.nccp.org/index.html>; World Association for Infant Mental Health, http://www.njaimh.org/world_assoc.htm ZERO TO THREE—Infant Mental Health Resource Center, <http://www.zerotothree.org/imh/>.

Patrice Hallock

Mitchell, Lucy Sprague (1878–1967)

Lucy Sprague Mitchell, founder of **Bank Street School of Education**, was a major figure in American progressive education during the early twentieth century. Influenced by John Dewey, she recognized children's need to learn through play and direct experience. A leader in the **child study movement**, Mitchell saw herself as an experimentalist. In addition, she democratized **progressive education** by spreading its ideals through teacher education and the development of children's writers.

In 1916 Mitchell founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE). This cooperative venture had four major activities: a lab school to work with children who were failing to thrive in a conventional school, analysis of the growth and development of normal children, the establishment of a sex education curriculum using nature study, and support of Caroline Pratt's Play School in Greenwich Village. The BEE was the site of much observation of children and their language, and ultimately became the Bank Street School of Education. While Mitchell embraced the scientific approach of her era, she was determined that an emphasis on the whole child should not be lost in the enthusiasm for measuring and testing (Mitchell, 1953). In its education of teachers, the Bank Street School combined the scientific study of children, an emphasis upon the whole child, a curriculum built upon direct experiences and fieldwork in its lab school classrooms. Under Mitchell, the Bank Street approach emphasized dramatic play centers that would link home and school, as well as the use of field trips to provide direct sensory experience. The laboratory school at Bank Street College of Education pioneered the **developmental interaction approach** which stressed that learning grows out of the interaction among the child, others, and environment. The laboratory school was the initial model for the 1965 **Head Start Program**.

In 1921 Mitchell published the *Here and Now Story Book*, a forerunner of much of the realism seen in children's literature today. With this book, she changed the emphasis in American children's literature from classic fairy tales to stories focused on everyday experiences of children. In the preface, "What Language Means to Young Children," she stated that "young children live largely in the 'here and now' world of their own experiences" (Mitchell, 1948, p. 7). Her insistence on children's interest in everyday and familiar events ignited a conflict with the New York Public Library known as "the fairy tale war." In addition to the *Here and Now Story Book*, Mitchell authored more than twenty children's books.

Recognizing that the "here and now" movement needed authors more talented than herself, Mitchell founded the Writer's Laboratory at the Bank Street School. Here, selected students in the teacher education program participated in a writer's workshop. The Writers' Laboratory developed a distinguished crew of children's authors, including Edith Thatcher Hurd, Ruth Krauss, Eve Merriam, and most famously Margaret Wise Brown. Mitchell also collaborated with the Little Golden Books, a series of children's books sold for 25 cents a copy in the post-World War II years.

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Susan Hall

MI Theory. See Multiple Intelligences, Theory of

Mixed-Age Grouping in Early Childhood Education

Mixed-age grouping in early childhood education is defined as “placing children who are at least a year apart in age into the same classroom groups in order to optimize what can be learned when children of different as well as same ages and abilities have frequent opportunities to interact” (Katz, Evangelou, and Hartman, 1990, p. 1). Mixed-age grouping is also known as heterogeneous, vertical, ungraded, nongraded, family grouping, and cross-age tutoring. In the current literature, the terms multiage grouping and multiage classroom appear more often than others.

Educating children in mixed-age groups has a long and uneven history in the United States. According to Stone (1996), the practice emerged out of necessity, in the one-room schoolhouse of the nineteenth century. It has been reconsidered periodically for various reasons such as during times of rapid expansion of public education enrollments and small school consolidation in the 1940s and 1950s. Briefly reintroduced during the reemergence of interest in progressive education in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, interest subsided again when the “back-to-basics” movement provoked concern with school achievement and standardized testing. Today, mixed-age grouping is accepted in many sectors of the educational community as a viable alternative way of **grouping** children for learning.

The actual extent to which mixed-age grouping is practiced is difficult to ascertain but, as evident in the number of publications, meetings, and internet-based information available, it appears that interest in it remains fairly strong worldwide (Ball, 2002). It should also be noted that approaches to early childhood education that emphasize the concept of community, such as Maria **Montessori**, Steiner (**Waldorf Education**) as well as the **Project Approach**, recommend mixed-age grouping of children in the classroom.

Discussion of the potential risks and benefits of mixed-age grouping often proceeds from one of three perspectives: as (1) an innovative practice, (2) an alternative to standard practice, or (3) a reflection of the preference of those involved. Although the selection of alternative educational practices is possible in some settings, in many developed countries as well as in rural or developing communities, mixed-age grouping is in fact the only option available (UNESCO, 1988). Most of what is known about the practice of mixed-age grouping comes from studies conducted in contexts of preference rather than necessity. It is conceivable that the experiences of students and teachers in mixed-age groups within a context of necessity are different from those of their counterparts in contexts where the practice has been chosen out of preference. Understanding of the characteristics of both contexts, preferential as well as obligatory, is needed to arrive at a complete understanding of the phenomenon.

Sociological Factors

Certain characteristics of contemporary society provide the background for recommending mixed-age grouping in early childhood education. First, the demographic trend of fewer children per family leads to early childhood experiences deprived of frequent opportunity for mixed-age interaction within the family. Second, children spend increasingly longer periods of time in the company of peers starting at an increasingly younger age. Most classes are composed of same-age peers as it is common practice that early childhood settings place children in groups according to strict chronological criteria. Furthermore, most state licensing regulations governing preschool and child-care institutions are specified according to the ages of those being served. In this sense, children have increasingly large proportions of experiences with same age peers for extended periods of time. Employing mixed-age grouping in early childhood education can provide opportunities for young children to come into contact and interact in a context that is characterized by diversity of knowledge, ability, and experience, much like a natural setting for human development.

Discussion about the philosophical and practical nature of mixed-age grouping, including benefits and risks, usually takes two different perspectives: application and research. Teachers and other educational practitioners with firsthand experiences with mixed-age classes tend to be enthusiastic about its benefits. One of the rationales often cited by supporters of mixed-age practices is that putting children together in mixed-age groups emulates real life, creates conditions resembling natural environments and leads to learning more and feeling better about classroom experience. Numerous anecdotal references, school-based reports, classroom evidence, and internet sites attest to the high regard for mixed-age grouping by those who practice it.

Those who recommend the adoption of mixed-age grouping in early childhood education today base their position on principles of individual development, the interactive nature of learning structures, principles of teaching young children as well as assessment, retention and promotion practices. Two international organizations are devoted to the promotion of mixed-age grouping; the Multi-Age Association of Queensland in **Australia** (see Volume 4) and the Jenaplan Schools Association that, while based in the Netherlands, represents mixed-age schools in various other countries. In North America state initiatives such as those implemented in Kentucky, Oregon, and British Columbia promote the idea of universal mixed-age and nongraded schooling for young children.

Individual Development

Age segregated or age-graded approaches to grouping children in preschool and primary school settings are justified on the normative assumption that all children of a given age are more like each other than they are like younger or older children at least in terms of development and capability. However, this normative assumption ignores what we know about how children actually develop and learn. In an era of increased attention to individual needs and aptitudes, it is questionable to subject children to schooling experiences that are narrowly

defined, focused on whole group instruction, and indifferent to the wide range of individual differences typical of a group of young children.

Learning Structures and Mixed-Age Tutoring

Individual characteristics, variations in development, and experience comprise the rich context within which interacting and learning from peers contributes to human development. The zone of proximal development as formulated by Lev **Vygotsky** along with the experimental work conducted in this area in the last twenty-five years supports the idea that mixed-age grouping provides an appropriate social context for cross-age tutoring. The teacher's role in fostering a climate in which both tutor and tutee benefit from the interaction is crucial to the success of the practice.

Additional support for mixed-age tutoring comes from understanding the role of modeling processes on teaching and learning in group settings. Having opportunities to observe and interact with more capable peers who can exhibit more mature, higher levels of organization in their behavior is a potential benefit for younger children (Gaustard, 1994). For the tutor the benefits can be seen in the effort to organize and represent material already mastered to an even more integrated conceptual level as the need will arise, and from having to develop critical and higher order thinking skills. For the tutee, the opportunity to observe, model, and interact with more capable peers enhances learning by optimizing the breadth, or the cognitive distance between interacting peers, of the zone of proximal development.

Principles of Teaching Young Children

All aspects of development during the first seven or eight years of life are characterized by a wide range of individual differences. By providing children with the opportunity to interact with peers who vary widely in their competences and abilities, early childhood classrooms can become more responsive to individual differences than classrooms organized along strict chronological criteria. The heterogeneity of a mixed-age class also is likely to reduce the teachers' temptation to conduct whole-group instruction and to have all the children in the class at the same levels of achievement. Children in mixed-age classrooms can also benefit from the continuity of their relationship with caring adults that enhances the quality of their experience.

Assessment, Retention and Promotion

Retention, promotion, and assessment of progress take on different meanings in the context of mixed-age groups from the standard same-age context. The expanded notion of what individual development means, given the wide range of competences found in young children, reduces the pressure to make school-placement decisions along single grade narrow achievement criteria. According to McClellan, mixed-age grouping could be considered a "lifeline to children at

risk” in that it can promote strong social competence development and improved self-concept, both important prerequisites for adapting to the demands of school.

Other scholars, however, caution against the assumption that mixed-age grouping works as an inherently effective practice and that the definition and purpose of it largely determines the degree of benefits it yields for students (Kinsey, 2001). Simply mixing the ages in grouping young children does not guarantee the potential benefits. Instead, developmentally appropriate practices, cooperative learning structures and integrated approaches to curriculum must all be employed as tools that work well with mixed-age grouping (Katz, 1995). The teacher has a major role in setting the stage for the benefits to occur and the potential risks to be minimized.

As a practice focused on continuity, community, and interaction, mixed-age grouping seems highly appropriate as a context for fostering life-long disposition to learn and democratic education. In mixed-age groups, the emphasis is placed on community as much as individual development.

Research Studies

Research evidence about the value of mixed-age grouping in early childhood education focuses on two types of questions. What are the effects of this practice on students? Which pedagogical factors account for positive effects of mixed-age grouping? These pedagogical factors might include organizational factors and teacher preparation.

Recent reviews of research on the effects of mixed-age grouping on student performance have examined studies drawn from different age and grade levels and including matched comparisons of multigrade vs. single grade classrooms as well as random assignment studies. Evidence of cognitive and noncognitive effects were analyzed and overall findings suggest that, at least in the cognitive development domain, students from mixed-age classrooms do not differ significantly from students in the single-age classrooms. In the area of noncognitive development, differences were found between the two groups that were not considered significant and did not necessarily contribute to achievement. It is difficult, however, to generalize these conclusions to younger children given the considerable methodological differences among the studies reviewed (Veenman, 1995, 1996). At the least, there is no evidence to suggest that student learning in mixed-age groups suffers as a result.

In another review of the same literature, Mason and Burns (1996) interpret research evidence in a way that does not favor mixed-age classrooms. Even though they agree with Veenman’s conclusion that the noncognitive effects were larger than the cognitive effects, they argue that overall a negative albeit small effect was found for the mixed-age grouping. In particular, the overall quality of teaching was found to be lower than in the single-grade classrooms. Mason and Burns point out that some of the ill effects of poor instruction resulting from decisions to create mixed-age classrooms for administrative purposes were offset by the selection of strong students to be in these classrooms. Evidence from longitudinal studies (Pavan, 1992) further suggests that for some children the experience of mixed-age interaction must be long-term before any effects can be observed.

Combined, such studies suggest that the effectiveness of mixed-age classrooms depends on a number of characteristics such as instructional grouping structures, classroom management, and peer tutoring (Guitierrez and Slavin, 1992). Time, funding, as well as administrative support seem to be crucial for the success of mixed-age classrooms. Because teaching in a mixed-age group setting requires “unlearning powerfully held notions about how children learn” (Miller, 1994), the teacher is embarking on a task that has the potential to initiate significant change within the individual and within the school. Such efforts require the support that administrators and principals can provide in order for teachers to successfully experiment with the myriad of changes that likely follow in other areas. The association between mixed-age grouping and an openness to change and inquiry is when an organizational plan becomes a philosophical decision.

Future Directions

Mixed-age grouping in early childhood education is an example of a potentially good practice in need of extensive detailed research. This is an instance in which informal evidence of the value of mixed-age groups gathered from practitioners tends to be positive and they practice this form of grouping with enthusiasm. In contrast, research studies that can analytically and systematically document the processes involved are difficult to carry out. Part of the difficulty is due to the fact that performing randomized experiments, which could provide cause and effect indications, would be unethical as well as impractical. In addition, it seems that teachers of mixed-age classrooms are implementing a variety of other teaching and interacting practices that can compound the effects of the group’s age composition. In other words, many different variables appear to be at work in the mixed-age grouping phenomenon.

Most of what is known today comes from work carried out in classroom settings of children in beginning elementary years. A research focus for the future might focus on the effects of mixed-age grouping practices on younger children and their experiences in child care and “educare” settings. Given the persisting demographic trends, children could potentially benefit from spending some of their group care time in mixed-age groups. Although this is common practice in early childhood services in other cultures, for example, Italy (Gandini and Edwards, 2001), to date there are no known studies documenting the benefits or risks of such practice.

Our interpretation of the information available this far is that one should not employ a reductionist perspective of “unpacking” the process-product elements of this practice. Instead, it would most likely be helpful if the focus of research efforts is on understanding the mesosystem of classroom ecology. Research on mixed-age grouping should focus on the complexity and richness of the interactions of children of different and same ages fostered in an educational environment that values relationships in a community of learners.

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Demetra Evangelou and Lilian G. Katz

Montessori, Maria (1878–1952)

The lifetime efforts of Maria Montessori influenced the worldwide shift from rigid authoritarian methods of parenting and education toward those that considered the needs and interests of each individual child.

Maria Montessori was born in the Italian province of Ancona on August 32, 1870. Her father was a government official who moved the family to Rome when she was five. Her lifetime can be viewed through historical periods. She was born the year that Italy became a united country with a strong feminist movement. In 1896, she became the first woman graduate of the University of Rome medical school. A month later, she was featured in many newspapers as Italian representative at the Women's International Congress in Berlin. Upon her return to Rome, she opened a private practice as a physician, taught in women's colleges, and became involved with other endeavors. When she began to work with institutions for "deficient" children, she developed a program based upon the writings of Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard, Johann Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, and others. It was designed to satisfy children's inner needs for learning as integral to the development of individual personality and their accomplishments soon gained widespread attention. (Stevens, 1913, p. 7).

After the worldwide depression of the 1890s, some apartment complexes for low-income workers in Rome were rehabilitated. A "children's house" for daytime supervision was included in one of them. When Montessori became its director when it opened in 1907, she continued experimenting with ways to facilitate children's learning through self-activity. Within months, articles describing the unique "Casa dei Bambini" appeared in popular magazines and newspapers. This began a lifetime of publications and worldwide lectures, as detailed in biographies by Lillard (1996), Kramer (1976) and others.

Although she spoke only in Italian, Montessori gave ten well-attended public lectures in American cities in 1913, organized a demonstration class, and presented papers at the San Francisco World's Fair and the National Educational Association conference in 1915, and returned for more lectures in 1917. During

these visits, she made friends with such notables as Alexander Graham Bell and the daughter of President Woodrow Wilson.

Despite this initial welcome, interest in her system was temporary in the United States. University faculty and other professionals either ignored her work or wrote negative criticism, with a book by William Kilpatrick (1914) having a devastating effect. Classroom teachers adopted some materials and techniques, but saw her method as simply another version of their Froebelian **kindergarten**. Her complex beliefs were couched in flowery Italian, not the scientific terminology that was becoming popular with psychologists, and translations were often inaccurate. Another problem was that she spoke only of her own new concepts, which meant that her inclusion of active outdoor play, art, and music were not recognized. Although the first Montessori schools in the United States were opened by women who had studied with her in Italy, the focus was often upon the didactic materials rather than her entire philosophy.

Montessori also fell from public favor because, like many feminists, she wanted to be a mother without marital restrictions. With the collaboration of Dr. Montesano, a colleague at the Orthophrenic School, son Mario was born in 1898. He spent his childhood with a foster family and in a boarding school. She had no siblings, but she introduced him as her adopted nephew when he accompanied her to California in 1915. Despite this, acceptance of Montessori's methods can be attributed to her son. By the 1920s, when Mario recognized her inability to manage financial affairs, he became her business manager. He scheduled their activities and developed commercial production of her didactic apparatus. In 1929, he organized the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and he coordinated global activities from its Amsterdam office until his death in 1982. His son and other family members continue that mission.

Preoccupation with World War I was an additional reason that Montessori was ignored in the United States. However, in 1917 she opened a research institute in Spain and in 1919 began a series of training courses in London. Mussolini persuaded her to coordinate an Italian educational program in 1922, but increased emphasis upon Fascism caused her to move back to Spain in 1934. When the Spanish Civil War erupted two years later, the Montessori family was evacuated on a British naval vessel. She opened a training center in the Netherlands in 1938, then conducted courses in India during the World War II years of 1938 to 1940. Her book on *The Absorbent Mind* was written after observing the contrast between the impersonally rigid infant care in Europe and the close physical contact maintained by Asian mothers. She returned to India in 1947 to open the Montessori University in Madras. Her last public address was in 1951, when she attended the International Montessori Congress in London. After decades of moving from place to place, she acquired an apartment in Amsterdam, which is now the AMI headquarters. It was about this time that someone asked her where she considered her home to be. Her often-quoted response was "My country is a star which turns around the sun and is called Earth."

After Montessori returned to Amsterdam, her previous efforts toward peace education were intensified. There was a standing ovation when she spoke at the **United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization** (UNESCO) in 1949, expressing again her belief that civilization depends upon children being given their rightful place in society while learning to fit into it. She was nominated

for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1949, 1950, and 1951. At the time of her sudden death in 1952, she was scheduling further travel to promote peace.

From 1913 onward, many concepts promoted by Montessori were integrated into parental practices and early childhood programs in America. These include active involvement by the child, self-selection of materials, self-pacing within a structured environment, and the role of facilitative adults instead of authoritarians. The resurgence of interest in Montessori schools began in 1958, with the first one in Greenwich, Connecticut. Nancy Rambush (1962/1998) was a leader in the effort to adapt the original European version of Montessori education to one more appropriate in America. It emphasized the role of parents and introduced other materials to supplement those of traditional Montessori schools. Her goal was to advance the system, and she correctly described the result as phenomenal. Nienhuis Montessori publications and materials continue to serve public and private schools worldwide. In addition to accredited and self-designated Montessori schools and teacher training programs functioning around the globe, her ideas about peace education, sensitive periods, and play as the child's work have been verified by countless research studies.

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Dorothy W. Hewes

Montessori Education

The Montessori Method, sometimes described as Montessori Education, is named after Maria **Montessori** and is based on her beliefs and practices first utilized in her *Casa dei Bambini* (Children's Home) in 1907 in the slum tenements in Rome. This method is based partially upon educational experiments with children with mental disabilities that originated in the work of Jean-Jacques **Rousseau** and the adaptation of those methods to aid the development of normal young children. Montessori's pedagogical approach was no doubt influenced by Montessori's medical training, and the desire of the Association of Good Building in the Quarter of San Lorenzo (the Quarter of the Poor) in Rome to reduce vandalism in their tenement buildings and promote hygienic education.

Montessori had both great respect for children at her "Casa" and also high expectations of them. Children were expected to present themselves on time, groomed and with clean clothing and could be expelled if they appeared unwashed, in soiled clothing, were incorrigible, or had parents who, through bad conduct, were perceived as destroying the educational work of the institution

(Montessori, 1912, 1964). Her goal was to create a prepared environment in which children have the freedom to explore and to pick and choose those things with which they wanted to work, thus fostering independence (Hainstock, 1997), without committing any rough or rude act. This was not initially to be a collective classroom with children seated in rows, but a place in which children were helped to become individually engaged, and focused on their individual lessons. She termed this approach to education *discipline through liberty*.

Montessori had a number of beliefs that guided her educational innovations, the most important of which assigned primacy to the period from birth to six years of age, when the development of character occurred. Montessori felt that many *defects*, including speech deficits, become permanent if not addressed during *sensitive periods*, a term borrowed from the Dutch biologist Hugo DeVries and referring to a special sensitivity for a particular developmental trait. The time between three and six years of age, at which time the child forms and establishes the principal functions, was such a sensitive period to Montessori. She observed that young children are capable of long periods of concentration and use learning materials repeatedly. She devised sets of sequenced learning materials that guide children toward reading, writing, understanding place value in mathematics, geometrical shapes and a geographical recognition of the continents and nations. While concentrating, children's movements become refined and coordinated, leading to increased self-discipline.

Montessori lessons were to be brief, simple (stripped of all that is not absolute truth), and objective (presented in such a way that the personality of the teacher would disappear) and the job of the teacher was to prepare the lesson, to deliver it, and to observe carefully the child's interaction with materials, adjusting her preparation and delivery based upon the child's response to it, quietly offering limited guidance, and preparing children for the next activity. Among the recurring features of her approach to teaching was an emphasis on a prepared environment, the use of didactic materials, and what she referred to as the "Three Period Lesson."

Montessori had specific ideas about the context in which children's learning should take place. School was to be a *prepared environment* in which a child is able to develop freely at his/her own pace, unhindered in the spontaneous unfolding of his natural capacities, through the manipulation of a graded series of materials designed to stimulate the senses and eventually the thinking, leading from perception to intellectual skills (Kramer, 1976). The classroom was designed so that a child can access the Montessori materials easily, freely selecting and replacing them without the need of adult assistance, once they have been properly introduced to them.

The educational method the teacher(s) employed in this prepared environment was based upon the presentation of *didactic materials* that attracted the spontaneous attention of the child, and contained a gradual gradation of stimuli. Many of these materials are *self-correcting*. For example, if a child tries to place a Knobbed Cylinder in the wrong hole, the child gets immediate feedback from the cylinder that the hole selected is too small or too large. The child experiments until the correct hole is selected, a term Montessori referred to as *auto-education*. Materials in Montessori's didactic system were originally manufactured by the House

of Labour of the Humanitarian Society at Milan, and starting in the 1920s through collaboration with Albert Nienhuis, by Nienhuis Montessori in Holland.

Materials were often presented initially in three stages, and Montessori adapted this *Three Period Lesson* technique from Edouard Seguin. In the first stage, for example, the child might be presented with two colors, red and blue, both of which appear face down on a mat. The teacher would turn over the first color tablet and say, "This is red" and repeat the same way for the blue tablet. The second stage is intended to help the child recognize the object that corresponds to its name. Here the teacher might say, "Give me the red one," and then, "Give me the blue one." The third stage focuses on recognition of the name that corresponds to the object. The teacher shows the child the red tablet and asks, "What is this?"

There are generally agreed to be four major pedagogic categories in her method. The *Exercises of Practical Life* include those that have to do with the care of the child's own person and those that are concerned with the care of the environment. Exercises included washing, polishing, sweeping, ironing, pouring, and brushing. The original intent was to help children learn how to keep themselves and their environment clean, what Standing (1957) called the "domestic occupation for young children." These have now come to mean activities related to real life that offer opportunities to develop coordinated fine movements, logical sequence, functional independence, and grace and courtesy.

The *Sensorial Activities* utilize concrete, mathematically precise materials that isolate each quality perceived by human senses. Activities with these materials offer opportunities to classify and refine sensory perceptions while developing abstractions, memory, and exactness. The aim is refinement of the differential perception of stimuli by means of repeated exercises. One well-known example is the pink tower, where young children place increasingly small cubes on top of bigger ones. Often Montessori would isolate one sense (e.g., sight, by use of a blindfold) to heighten other senses, and incorporated whispering and *solemn silence* in her approach.

Language Activities include materials centered on vocabulary enrichment, spoken-language skills, writing, and reading. The Sandpaper Letters, an alphabet composed on individual sandpaper capital letters pasted on pink, painted boards, were used to introduce individual letters to children.

Numeration Activities use concrete, sensorial-based materials that offer interactive experiences with numbers, numerical relationships, and the foundations of the decimal system. The Golden Beads (small beads made of plastic or ceramic, and arranged individually as a unit, as a bar of 10, as a square of 100, and as a cube of 1,000) are a classic example of such a numeration material.

Although many associate Montessori's work with the period of early childhood, Montessori came to recognize the unique learning capabilities of elementary and middle-grade students. She created an integrated curriculum incorporating anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, geometry, history, literature, mathematics, and zoology that is now used in early and some upper-elementary programs. The first Montessori public elementary school program was established in 1965 by Nancy Rambusch in Cincinnati. Others have adapted her methods to teaching children in the home (Hainstock, 1997).

Early criticisms of Montessori's method were that she minimized the role of the adult in preparing what children would discover in the classroom as well as minimized the effect of the relationship between teacher and child. This was perhaps a natural reaction by outsiders to observers of a teacher who appears to have less control because her influence is less obvious than in traditional classrooms. Another, perhaps more justified, criticism was that in an attempt to keep the method "pure," both Montessori and her early followers maintained a tight control on the model's dissemination.

Continuing criticisms include a perceived lack of spontaneity and creativity in classrooms, insufficient time for social interactions, materials that are too restrictive, an overemphasis on "practical life" activities, an approach that is outdated, and concerns about transitions and adjustments by children moving from Montessori to public school classrooms using other approaches. Ironically, given that her programs were desired for children of poor families, contemporary critics point to the fact that the predominately private Montessori schools are only appropriate for or at least available to well-to-do families.

In spite of these controversies, and well over 100 years after the first *Casa dei Bambini* was opened, Montessori's method endures and several teacher training programs and Montessori Children's Houses continue to flourish. There are an estimated 3,000 private Montessori schools and several hundred primary and/or lower elementary programs, as well as several upper-elementary programs in public schools, in the United States. There are also nearly twenty Montessori education graduate programs in the United States and training programs in nineteen other countries. Many features of the approach that Montessori developed have become embedded in early childhood classrooms and incorporated by manufacturers of materials for programs for young children. She played a major role in influencing society's image of children as different from adults. She put forth persuasive arguments that children learn through play, that early development has an impact on later development, that there is much to be learned from careful observation, and that it is often better not to intervene when a child begins to struggle with a material. She contributed to our understanding that scale is an important feature of materials and furniture for children, that educational materials may facilitate development, and that intrinsically interesting and self-correcting materials may sustain attention. And finally, Maria Montessori believed strongly that schools must be a part of communities and parents should be involved in their children's education.

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Michael Kalinowski

Moral Development. *See* Development, Moral

Mothers

Motherhood is a role experienced by many women throughout the world. In the United States alone there are an estimated 80.5 million mothers; as such, mothers comprise well over a quarter of the entire U.S. population. While there are many commonalities among mothers, differences also exist, for example, in the age of motherhood, rates and timing of employment, and with whom parenting responsibilities are shared. Differences also exist across historical and cultural contexts, and in the individual and society's interpretations of motherhood. However, every group has some basic tenets that help to define the role of mothers.

The age at which women become mothers varies broadly. Some women bear children as adolescents, while a growing number of women in their forties and fifties are now able to bear children because of advances in reproductive technologies. From 1970 to 2002 the average age of U.S. women at the birth of their first child rose from 21.4 years to 25.1 years. In the last twelve years the birth rate among teenage mothers (ages 15-19) decreased by 30 percent, accompanied by a 31 percent increase in birth rates among women aged 35-39 and a 51 percent increase for women aged 40-44. These changes in birth rates among teenage mothers and women aged 35-44 could explain the increase in the average age of a U.S. woman when she gives birth for the first time.

In the United States, the numbers of teenage women having children started declining well over ten years ago; many have attributed the decline in birth rates among this population to welfare reform that was enacted in 1996. **Temporary Aid to Needy Families** (TANF) contains provisions that serve to reduce teenage pregnancy and dependency on welfare. In order to receive cash benefits under TANF, for example, a teenage parent must live with an adult over the age of 21 and attend school or job training. These provisions were included because of research findings indicating that teen mothers who live with their own mothers appear to benefit economically and cognitively from this arrangement. These findings are consistent with patterns of multigenerational living that have characterized family lives for centuries in diverse cultures around the world. In the United States, teen mothers who live in a multigenerational setting generally obtain more schooling than teen mothers who live in other arrangements. However, researchers have also found that this multigenerational arrangement may at times be a source of stress and conflict.

As has been the case throughout history, motherhood is associated with and influenced by features particular to the social and cultural context. In many industrialized societies, mothers find themselves trying to negotiate their careers or employment status in combination with motherhood. This particular negotiation

is different from what is experienced by mothers in agrarian or traditional societies. Many women decide to stay home with their infants, if it is economically possible, and other women divide their time between work and home, working either part-time or full-time. Over the last 30 years, rates of maternal employment in the United States have increased dramatically. In 1976, 31 percent of mothers with children under the age of 1 were participating in the labor force. However, in 1998, 59 percent of mothers with children under the age of 1 were participating in the labor force. In 2004, 55 percent of U.S. women who had given birth in the last twelve months were either employed or looking for a job. Upon deciding to return to work, mothers must contend with arranging care for their young children, adapting to their role of motherhood, and attempting to balance their work and family life.

Research on the impact of work demands on a mother and the impact of these demands on the child has led to numerous changes in parental leave taking policies after the birth of a child as well as changes in policies limiting the amount of work hours. Parental leave policies in different cultures convey distinct interpretations of the maternal role, the mother-child relationship, and female participation in the workforce. For example, in Norway, a mother can take up to a year's leave and receive 80 percent of her salary, and in Mexico mothers can take up to twelve weeks and receive 100 percent of their salary. In the United States women can take up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave. As for policy changes in work hours, in 2000, France adopted a 35-hour workweek to help facilitate a parent's negotiation of work and family life. Since mothers often are considered a major influence on their children's development, some people (researchers, policymakers, religious organizations, family members) express concern that maternal employment puts children's development at risk, since these young children would be cared for by nonmaternal caregivers.

According to the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF), as of 2002, about three quarters of infants and toddlers of working mothers in the United States are in some form of child care. Child-care settings range from informal care by a relative to formal center-based care. About 39 percent of infants and toddlers are in care for an average of twenty-five hours per week. Although a debate exists around the effects of child-care participation on the development of young children, research has found that the quality of child care is correlated with cognitive, language, social and emotional developmental outcomes in young children (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1998, 2000). However, the family exerts a much greater impact on children's development than does child care. Mother's perceptions of their experience at work, as well as the amount of earnings, also appear to impact their children's development. A mother's negative perception of her work experience and low earnings can lead to increased stress and difficulty managing the household. A positive perception and higher earnings can foster maternal mental health and enable participation in high-quality child care.

The sharing of parenting responsibilities also creates a demarcation for many women entering motherhood. Some women share the responsibilities with a spouse or partner while other women share the responsibilities with other family members (e.g., grandmother, aunts, siblings), and some women bear the sole responsibility of caring for their child. The number of single mothers has increased

from 3 million in 1970 to 10 million in 2003. Rates of single fatherhood have also increased over this time. Of family groups in the United States that include children, about 26 percent have a single mother as the head of the household. About three quarters of all single parents are employed; therefore these parents are highly dependent on informal and formal child care. Young children of single mothers spend an average of thirty-four hours in child care, eleven hours more than the young children of two-parent families. About 46 percent of families headed by a single mother with a child under the age of 5 live below the poverty level. Researchers have found that children living in **poverty** are more likely to develop emotional, cognitive, and behavioral problems than children living above the poverty line.

Despite the age at which women become mothers, their employment status, or with whom child care responsibilities are shared, a major component of motherhood is adaptation to a role that is in constant flux as the child develops, as well as a conceptual adaptation to society's expectations. As children develop, caretakers must constantly adapt to the child's developmental needs. What a child needs from his mother as an infant varies from what that child needs as a toddler or adolescent. Because of this fluctuation in the child's needs, the maternal role is a developmental process, with both stability and a need for flexibility and change.

Motherhood, in a societal context, is also in a state of flux. Conceptually, society's expectations of motherhood in the United States are constantly debated. Although en masse, working mothers and single mothers have existed in the United States for generations, the general expectation for women traditionally has been marriage and, once pregnant, remaining at home to raise children. In the past, women who wanted to pursue a career had to abandon the prospect of becoming a parent. In some respects, this separation of career and parenthood for women has changed dramatically in the last 40 years. Policies have been enacted in order to support women's pursuits of both careers and motherhood (e.g., Pregnancy Discrimination Act—outlawing discriminatory hiring practices because of pregnancy, Family and Medical Leave Act—providing a 12-week unpaid leave for eligible caretakers). Conversely, women have also been criticized for choices related to careers and motherhood. Many women, still, find balancing family and employment roles challenging yet rewarding.

Motherhood takes place alongside other roles that women play, both at home (e.g., spouse/partner, daughter, sibling), in the workplace (employer/employee), and in other social contexts (e.g., friend, volunteer). While most women thrive in all of these roles, balancing motherhood with other activities, roles, and expectations is complicated and at times stressful. Societies differ in the supports (both formal and informal) that are provided for mothering. Formal supports (e.g., U.S. Family and Medical Leave Act) have enabled women to become mothers while also continuing their participation in society. These formal supports, along with many informal supports provided by family and friends, also serve to provide women with information, material goods, and services (e.g., **Women, Infants and Children [WIC]**, **Child Care and Development Fund**), and emotional support in her mothering role. Child-care services, **parenting education** programs, parenting support groups, and help from friends and family are important in supporting mothers and their children. When women have sources of social support

(emotional, informational, tangible/material) they are able to be more effective and fulfilled as parents.

Many theories of child development emphasize the role that mothers have in their children's development. Sigmund Freud, for example, highlighted the mother-infant relationship as the "prototype of all other love relationships." Human infants are dependent on caregivers for a very long time. Typically, mothers play a primary role in meeting an infant's biological and emotional needs. John Bowlby and others focused on the **attachments** that infants form to their mothers as an important component of personality development and adaptive functioning. While there are many influences on children's development (including family environment, genetic/constitutional and social context), research has shown that positive development of children is facilitated by maternal sensitivity, empathy, emotional availability, and reciprocal interaction. Several factors influence a mother's manner of interacting with her child, including the way in which she was parented, and her current circumstances and support for her as a mother. While the circumstances of motherhood vary across societies and contexts, mothers hold an important role in all societies, serving to nurture, educate, and increase the life chances of the next generation.

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Claudia Miranda and M. Ann Easterbrooks

Multicultural Education. See Antibias/Multicultural Education

Multiple Intelligences, Theory of

Multiple intelligences theory (hereafter referred to as MI theory) was named and developed by Howard Gardner, a professor of cognition and education at Harvard University. Introduced in his 1983 book, *Frames of Mind*, Gardner's theory challenges the views of intelligence as measured by **intelligence quotient (IQ)** and as described in Jean Piaget's universal stages of cognitive development. Arguing that human intelligence is neither a single entity nor a unified set of processes, Gardner (2004) maintains that there are several distinct, relatively autonomous

intelligences. Individual intellectual profiles reflect varied configurations of these intellectual capacities.

Gardner (1999) defines intelligence as “a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture.” Describing it as a potential, Gardner emphasizes the emergent and responsive nature of intelligence, further differentiating his theory from conceptions of intelligence as fixed and innate. Whether a potential will be activated depends in large part on the values of the culture in which an individual grows up and on the opportunities available in that culture. Development of the intelligences is influenced simultaneously by species and individual biological dispositions, environmental factors, education, and personal effort. These activating forces contribute to the expression of a range of intelligences across cultures and among individuals.

Gardner began rethinking the nature of intelligence by examining the range of adult end-states valued in diverse cultures around the world. To identify abilities that support these end-states, he examined research from numerous disciplines, including biology, neurology, psychology, and anthropology. He then formulated eight criteria for identifying an intelligence, including neurological evidence, traceable evolutionary history, and the use of an encoded symbol system. Gardner (1999) argues that, because intelligences are used to solve real-life problems, the measurement of intelligences must also be based on the functioning of abilities in diverse real-life situations. For Gardner, the criteria developed to identify intelligences are one of the most important contributions of his theory.

To date, Gardner has identified eight intelligences: Linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (see Gardner [2004] for a full description). Although linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences have been emphasized in psychometric testing and school settings, no intelligence in the MI framework is inherently more important than the others. Gardner does not claim that this roster is exhaustive or that the particular delineations among the intelligences are definitive. Rather, his aim is to establish support for a pluralistic view of intelligence. With the identification of intelligences based on eight empirically oriented criteria, the roster will be reviewed as new findings are reported.

Intelligence and Related Constructs

Intelligence in the MI framework relates to, as well as differs from, the psychological constructs of process, domain, style, and content (Gardner, in press). In terms of process, the intelligence itself is not a process; rather it is a *capacity* to process certain kinds of information in certain ways. Each intelligence operates with processes carried out by dedicated neural networks, and each has its attendant psychological processes, such as logical-mathematical or interpersonal processing.

Although related, the concepts of intelligence and domain are readily distinguishable. Intelligence refers to biological and psychological potentials within an individual. Domains are bodies of knowledge valued and applied within a culture.

An intelligence may be deployed in many domains. For example, spatial intelligence may operate in the domains of visual arts, navigation, and engineering. Similarly, performance in a domain may require the use of more than one intelligence. For example, an effective teacher relies on at least linguistic and personal intelligences.

Style and intelligence are fundamentally different psychological constructs. Style refers to an individual's characteristic and consistent approach to organizing and processing information; for example, a person can have an impulsive or playful style. MI theory is not a stylistic theory; rather, a person's intellectual profile reflects his or her computational capacities to process various kinds of content—for example, spatial, musical, and person-related—in the environment. While the psychological literature regards styles as relatively stable attributes of the individual and evident across a wide range of situations, MI theory suggests the possibility that style is a domain-specific construct as well.

According to MI theory, an intelligence is sensitive to specific contents, but is not itself a content. For example, logical-mathematical intelligence is activated when individuals operate on quantities, written numbers, and scientific formulas. These intellectual operations, however, entail more than content of numbers and formulas. MI theory contends that different intelligences are geared to different contents and there are no general capacities such as memory, perception, or speed of processing that necessarily cut across content areas. This conceptualization distinguishes MI theory from other pluralistic views of intelligence that claim mental faculties function similarly in all content areas and operate according to general laws.

Validation of the Theory

Since the introduction of MI theory in 1983, much research has been done in the fields of cognition, education, and neuroscience, either explicitly investigating MI theory or conducting studies related to its claims. Recent neurological research provides convincing data that linguistic, mathematical, and musical processing are cognitively and neurologically distinct; indeed, as Gardner speculated earlier, each of these faculties itself consists of dissociable components (Gardner, in press). In educational studies, researchers are finding that, when a wide range of abilities are assessed, children are more likely to show uneven profiles of strength and weakness than a uniform level of general ability (Chen and Gardner, 2005; Chen and McNamee, 2005).

MI theory can be validated further by evaluating its application in educational settings. Numerous reports indicate that MI theory has given teachers and parents more accurate perceptions of children's intellectual potentials as well as more specific methods for supporting and developing these potentials. Recently, Kornhaber, Veenema, and Fierros (2003) studied forty-one elementary schools across the United States that had applied MI theory to school-based practices for a minimum of three years. All these schools reported improvements in standardized test scores, student discipline, parent participation, or the performance of students with learning differences. The majority linked the improvements to MI-based interventions.

MI Theory and Early Education

MI theory can serve as a conceptual framework for implementing developmentally appropriate practice in early education. MI theory defines **intelligence** as a potential; the driving force of developmentally appropriate practice is to inspire all children to achieve their highest potentials. Three requirements for implementing **developmentally appropriate practice** are knowledge about children and their development, subject matter and curriculum goals, and teaching and assessment. In each of these knowledge areas, MI theory can be used to help teachers achieve the goals of developmentally appropriate education.

Knowledge of children and their development. Development of what many refer to as the “whole child” is a well-established concept in U.S. early education. MI theory contributes to a more differentiated understanding of this development (Chen and Gardner, 2005). Knowledge of children in the MI framework goes beyond describing general cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth to identify a wider range of more specific developmental potentials. Because each intelligence reflects particular problem-solving features, information-processing capacities, and developmental trajectories, knowing about one area of a child’s development does not generalize to knowledge of another area. In-depth understanding requires a careful review of each child’s intellectual profile—his or her proclivities, strengths, vulnerabilities, and interests. Although all normally developing children possess all the intelligences, from early on they exhibit different strengths and have distinctive profiles. Strength in one intelligence does not necessarily predict strength in another.

Development from MI’s perspective is domain-specific and contextual (Gardner, in press). The development of young children’s intellectual abilities is tied to specific bodies of knowledge and skills and is not based on general cognitive structures that operate across domains. Strengths and weakness exhibited in a child’s intellectual profile may change over time. Development is also contextualized. Specifically, intelligence develops among individuals when they interact with others, use cultural tools, or engage in activities. To foster young children’s intellectual abilities, MI theory suggests that early childhood educators attend to cultural values and tools, community goals, and the child’s motivations.

Knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals. Early childhood **curriculum** is inclusive; activities in the areas of language, **mathematics**, music, visual arts, and movement are included weekly, if not daily, in most preschool classrooms. However, their significance for the development of young children’s minds is not typically deemed equal. Language and reading are the top priorities for learning. For MI theory, the development of multiple intellectual potentials in young children requires extensive exposure to a wide range of areas. Developing varied symbol systems is the foremost task during the early years. Limited exposure to some areas decreases possibilities for young children to express themselves with diverse tools and to develop their potentials to the greatest extent. It also reduces the likelihood of discovering interests and abilities that parents and teachers can nurture at a young age.

Early childhood teachers are often trained as generalists. They learn to integrate a range of content areas using themes and project-based approaches to teaching. An MI-based approach to curriculum development invites teachers to use multiple entry points to promote children's in-depth exploration and understanding of topics and concepts essential to early learning and development. MI theory is not and should not be the goal of early childhood curriculum. Instead, this framework should be used to assist teachers in organizing curriculum around essential topics, in supporting children's learning of key concepts and skills in relation to these topics, and in promoting the development of multiple intellectual potentials supported by multiple symbol systems (Gardner, 1999).

Knowledge of teaching and assessment. Early childhood teaching has been known for its play-based, emergent, and constructivist techniques. MI theory differentiates the **pedagogy** of early teaching by emphasizing building on children's particular strengths and using them to build bridges to other areas of learning. In contrast to traditional approaches that focus primarily on children's deficits, teachers in MI classrooms also attend to areas in which a child excels. Teachers invite children to participate in learning tasks that further develop their strengths in ways they are motivated to pursue. Teachers also give children opportunities to use their strengths as tools to express what they have learned. Teacher support for children's strengths contributes to a positive self-image and an increased likelihood for success in other learning areas. The strategy of building on children's strengths has also proven effective in helping children identified as at-risk for school failure (Chen, Krechevsky, and Viens, 1998).

Effective teaching requires appropriate uses of **assessment**. Assessment based on MI theory is consistent with the principles of developmentally appropriate assessment advocated by many early childhood educators. The primary purpose of assessment is to aid development and learning, rather than to sort, track, or label. Features of appropriate assessment include on-going observation in the classroom, **documentation** of children's behavior when engaged in meaningful activities, and linking assessment results to teaching and learning processes. Of particular importance to MI-based assessment is the identification of children's strengths. This is accomplished by sampling a wide range of abilities in the assessment process. Project Spectrum and Project Bridging are two examples of assessment systems designed to capture diverse intellectual strengths in young children (Chen, Krechevsky, and Viens, 1998; Chen and McNamee, 2005).

Since the publication of *Frames of Mind* in 1983, MI theory has become widely recognized in the fields of developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and education. The theoretical emphasis on concepts of diversity, equality, possibility, richness, and expansion confirms beliefs about children as individuals that many educators hold and practice. MI theory also provides educators as well as parents with language to describe children's distinctive intellectual profiles; and supports calls for mobilizing resources to help individual children reach their highest potentials and to enrich their contributions to society. *See also* Curriculum, Mathematics; Curriculum, Music; Curriculum, Physical Development; Curriculum, Visual Art; Development, Language.

Further Readings: Chen, J.-Q., and H. Gardner (2005). Alternative assessment from a Multiple Intelligences theoretical perspective. In D. P. Flanagan, J. L. Genshaft, and P. L. Harrison, eds., *Beyond traditional intellectual assessment: Contemporary and emerging theories, tests, and issues*. 2nd ed. New York: Guilford, pp. 77-102; Chen, J.-Q., M. Krechevsky, and J. Viens (1998). *Building on children's strengths: The experience of project spectrum*. New York: Teachers College Press; Chen, J.-Q., and G. McNamee (2005). *Bridging: Assessment for teaching and learning in early childhood classrooms*. Chicago: Erikson Institute; Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books; Gardner, H. (2004). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. 20th anniversary ed. New York: Basic Books; Gardner, H. (in press). *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons*. New York: Basic Books; Kornhaber, M., S. Veenema, and E. Fierros (2003). *Multiple Intelligences: Best ideas from research and practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Jie-Qi Chen

Music Curriculum. See Curriculum, Music

N

NACCRRRA. *See* National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

NAECTE. *See* National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators

NAEYC. *See* National Association for the Education of Young Children

NARA. *See* National Association for Regulatory Administration

NAREA. *See* North American Reggio Emilia Alliance

Narrative

From birth, the world of babies and children is organized by scripts that reflect familial and cultural child-rearing patterns. It could be said that babies join and change the story of a family. When children begin using language they use it to organize the world. This typically takes a narrative form. As they begin to engage in sociodramatic play they act out scripts from their everyday lives that reflect events they seek to understand. Parents and early childhood educators use stories, both oral and written, to impart information, lead children into literacy, and help children cope with difficult issues in their lives. They also tell stories because it is a natural and enjoyable component of child rearing.

Narrative is a fundamental component of early cognitive and emotional development. As the child enters a particular culture he begins to understand and adopt scripts that form his understanding of himself in the family and larger society. Language, that used by adults and older children to guide him as well as that he uses to reflect on his own activity, begins to structure his understanding and memory. As he develops the capacity to pretend, he uses such play to act out stories that represent various aspects of his life. This can be simply arranging blocks of various size in a way that represents family members, acting out bedtimes rituals, or replicating the actions of television superheros. By the time he reaches school he

brings with him highly developed, but culturally varied, ways of describing his world (Heath, 1983).

Throughout the world families and communities transmit information about how to behave, how to survive and who to remember through various forms of story telling. And the literatures of the world's cultures include narrative tales that chronicle the history of civilization from the beginning of time to the birth of the most recent member of the community. The folklore of a society is often captured in the stories that are told to children.

The role of early childhood educators in supporting development and learning is characterized by both explicit and implicit use of narrative. The transition of a child from home to child care literally involves adding to the child and family's story. A new set of characters and setting enters the child's life. This can be done in a manner in which both parent and caregiver attend to the child's capacity to weave new elements into his story, giving him words and scripts through which he can understand his new surroundings (e.g., "Your cubbie is where you put your coat when you first come in, then you go to the sand table. Daddy comes after we play outside."). Such scripts provide consistency and security. They also provide the framework in which he constructs his understanding of how the world works.

Children's narratives themselves play a large and established role in the early childhood classroom. A book corner with clearly displayed books, a dramatic play area with dress-up clothes, and manipulatives with which children can act out events of interest and imagination are typical in a developmentally appropriate preschool classroom. Teachers read a wide variety of children's books to children both at circle time and in small groups. Narratives represented by these books cover the range of interests of young children from retelling ancient myths to addressing daily concerns like separation and going to sleep, and from imparting basic information to sparking children's imagination. Early literacy activities including reading chapter books, reading aloud and silently, and writing become more prevalent in the early elementary grades. Teachers, in providing materials for play as well as in selecting reading content, should be sensitive to the cultural characteristics of the families and communities they serve. In the development of writing children are asked to tell of what they know and what they have experienced; they become writers of stories.

A notable curriculum innovation that is deeply grounded in the use of narrative is the storytelling method described by Vivian Paley (1990). She maintains that children use stories to help understand what they are most interested in, "nothing less than truth and life." Through the telling of stories children learn to organize both their cognitive and affective lives. Caregivers join this process by transmitting the valued stories of the culture as well as the ways stories are created within the culture. *See also* Development, Language; Language Diversity; Play as storytelling.

Further Readings: Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press; Nelson, K. (1989). *Narratives from the crib*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Paley, Vivian (1990). *The boy who would be a helicopter: The uses of storytelling in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Sutton-Smith, B. (2001).

Emotional breaches in play and narrative. In A. Goncu and E. Klein, eds., *Children in play, story, and school*. New York: Guilford Press.

John Hornstein

National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA)

The National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) is a U.S.-based, nonprofit organization for human care licensers. Chartered at Tulane University in New Orleans in 1976, NARA was founded on principles arising out of the scholarship of Norris Class. That scholarship helped licensers understand the conceptual and legal foundations of their profession and established the theoretical basis for licensing on which NARA's education efforts continue to build.

NARA's members formulate and enforce laws that set standards and protect vulnerable populations, including children in all forms of out-of-home care. Their responsibilities are intensive and technically demanding. Most are employed by governments in states, provinces and native nations in the United States, Canada, and the European Union.

NARA's goal is to promote regulatory services that support its vision, "consumer protection through prevention," and its focus is the advancement and dissemination of knowledge related to regulatory administration. NARA's key activities focus on effective regulation and on education and professional recognition for licensers.

An annual licensing seminar serves as a forum for networking and knowledge exchange. That conference regularly attracts licensers from jurisdictions throughout the United States and Canada, and a variety of other countries. In addition, NARA provides consultation to licensing agencies in all areas related to regulatory administration, including the drafting of child-care licensing rules. NARA also delivers formal regulatory training based on its *Licensing Curriculum* and other educational materials. Approved NARA consultants and trainers have successfully completed contracts across the United States and in Canada and abroad.

NARA sets standards for excellence in licensing through activities like the publication of a licensor code of ethics and position statements on topics such as the privatization of regulatory functions. NARA also adds to the growing body of knowledge about licensing and other regulatory processes by sponsoring and publishing its own research. To support these initiatives, extend the tradition of inquiry and honor the memory of one of its founders, NARA has established the Norris E. Class Lecture and Research Fund.

As an advocate and voice for child care licensing, NARA cooperates with other organizations, including the National Child Care Information Center, **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**, National Child Care Association, Child Welfare League of America, Healthy Child Care America's Back to Sleep Campaign, and AAP/APHA/MCHB/HRSA initiatives related to *Caring for Our Children*. NARA is recognized as a Strategic Partner by *Child Care Information Exchange Magazine*.

NARA's executive director and members of its board of directors respond to direct requests for technical assistance from state licensing agencies and others.

Since January 2005, NARA has been responsible for developing and publishing the annual child-care licensing studies, previously published by The Children's Foundation in partnership with NARA. NARA also disseminates information to support technical assistance in the licensing area through the *NARA Licensing Newsletter*, and maintains a website at www.naralicensing.org.

Licensors play a key role in the provision of early care and education. Out-of-home care must comply with licensing laws enacted by governments to protect the health and safety of young children and establish a foundation for program quality. Through tiered quality initiatives and other measures, licensing systems are increasingly playing an expanded role as mechanisms for supporting providers and raising program quality. In fulfilling its vision, NARA assists licensors as they professionalize their activities and take steps to improve their ability to prevent harm to children and safeguard their future.

Further Readings: Colbert, J. (2002). *Regulating dimensions of quality in early care and education: a review of the research*. Conyers, GA: NARA; Gazan, H. (1997). *Emerging trends in child care regulation*. Conyers, GA: NARA; Koch, P., and N. Scalera (2001). *The case against privatizing human care licensing*. Conyers, GA: NARA; *NARA Licensing Curriculum* (1988; revised edition 2000). Conyers, GA: NARA; Stevens, C. (1995). *NARA code of ethics*. Conyers, GA: NARA.

Judith A. Colbert and Pauline Koch

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the largest and most influential organization of early childhood educators in the world. NAEYC has approximately 100,000 members and a national network of nearly 350 local, state, and regional affiliates. Since 1926, NAEYC and its members have been leading and consolidating the efforts of individuals and groups working to achieve healthy development and constructive education for all young children.

NAEYC members include teachers and administrators in child care, preschool, **kindergarten**, elementary school, **Head Start** and other programs for young children. NAEYC members are also higher education faculty, trainers, state agency officials, parents, policymakers, and others committed to improving the quality of education for children from birth through eight years of age.

NAEYC leads efforts to raise the standards for early childhood education programs, and works with educators and programs around the country to help them achieve higher standards. The organization provides the following services aimed toward these goals:

- *Early Childhood Program Accreditation*—NAEYC established and operates a national voluntary accreditation system to raise the quality of early childhood education and help families and others identify high-quality programs. To earn NAEYC Accreditation, programs meet professional standards in areas such as staff qualifications, curriculum and child-to-teacher ratios. There are now more than 10,000 NAEYC-accredited programs, serving more than 900,000 young children and families. Families can search for NAEYC-accredited programs in their communities through the NAEYC Web site.

- *Professional Development*—NAEYC provides educators and early childhood professionals with the information and education services they need to help more children get a great start. The NAEYC Annual Conference draws more than 25,000 people from around the world for workshops and seminars on research, policy, and practices in early childhood education.
- *Resources*—NAEYC publishes *Young Children*, an award-winning journal for early childhood educators, as well as *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. The association also produces books, videos, brochures, and other materials to bring the latest strategies and research to teachers, families, and others working to support the development and education of young children. Many NAEYC resources are available through the association's Web site at, www.naeyc.org.

Further Readings: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2001). *NAEYC at 75: Reflections on the past, challenges for the future*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Mark R. Ginsberg

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation

The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** administers the nation's oldest and largest voluntary accreditation system for early childhood programs serving young children, the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation.

The 1980s were a time of dramatic growth in the field of early childhood education. Women were entering the workforce in significant numbers and the number of single-parent families headed by women was also growing. Both these factors helped to create a demand for full-day, full-year child care. At the same time, the United States Congress was considering the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements that would have created national standards for child-care programs. President Reagan eventually vetoed this legislation, which ended this possibility. State child-care regulations varied dramatically from state to state which added to the uneven landscape of program quality. In response to this situation, NAEYC decided to establish voluntary national standards for program quality in the context of a process by which programs could achieve that quality.

In 1985, NAEYC launched its early childhood program accreditation system in order to impact the quality of early childhood programs on a national level. NAEYC Accreditation is delivered through the association's NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation (the NAEYC Academy).

During its first few years, the growth of NAEYC Accreditation was steady and constant. In the early 1990s, however, both private and public support for accreditation grew substantially. States began to offer higher reimbursement rates to accredited programs. Private groups such as the American Business Collaborative provided funds to programs to support their achievement of accreditation. These and other initiatives directly affected the number of programs pursuing accreditation in general, and NAEYC Accreditation in particular.

As a result, in the NAEYC Academy's first two decades, demand for accreditation grew beyond expectations and the system was almost outstripped by the demands placed upon it. In 1999, the NAEYC Governing Board realized that not only had its accreditation system outgrown its original structure, but that early childhood education and the accreditation system itself needed to be reexamined and positioned for the next twenty years, so the future impact could be as great as that of the first twenty years.

The Board established the National Commission on Accreditation Reinvention to conduct a comprehensive review of its accreditation system. The Commission was asked to recommend changes that would prepare the association's accreditation for the future and continue to offer early childhood programs a vehicle for improvements in program quality.

At the conclusion of its two-year appointment, the Reinvention Commission made ten recommendations to NAEYC's Governing Board. The intent of the recommendations was to strengthen and restore the reliability, accountability, and credibility of NAEYC's accreditation system by redesigning it:

- To establish NAEYC Accreditation as a standard-bearer for program excellence.
- To improve program accountability for families and others.
- To focus NAEYC's accreditation system on programs for children from birth through kindergarten.

Following approval by the NAEYC Governing Board of the reinvention commission's recommendations, it appointed a Commission on NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria. This second Commission's recommendations on early childhood program standards and accreditation performance criteria were approved by the NAEYC Governing Board in spring 2005.

The Governing Board also appointed a Council for NAEYC Accreditation, to work with the NAEYC Academy on policy changes to support the delivery of the new accreditation system. The NAEYC Council is accountable to the NAEYC Governing Board and also has as part of its responsibility to monitor the new system's performance.

NAEYC Academy is in the midst of implementing the reinvented accreditation system. There are over 10,000 accredited programs that serve over 800,000 children. Many of the reinvention commission's recommendations have now been established as NAEYC Academy policies or procedures. NAEYC's early childhood program accreditation system was completely reinvented and fully operational in the fall of 2006.

Kim Means

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) was formed in 1984. NACCRRA's earliest mission statements described the organization's two main goals: to promote the growth and development of quality child-care resource and referral (CCR&R) services, and to exercise national policy leadership to build a diverse, quality child-care system with parental choice and equal access for all families. NACCRRA continues to balance

its dual purposes to serve its membership and to highlight the child-care needs of the nation's children and families.

Child-care resource and referral agencies provide a range of services to parents, child-care providers, and their communities. CCR&R has its roots in the following:

- Federal legislation (Community Coordinated Child Care in 1967–1969, and the Dependent Care Grant in 1984)
- National support efforts (The Ford Foundation (1978); Wheelock College Summer Seminars (1983); and Work/Family Directions & IBM (1984)
- Telephone messages from parents and communities to early childhood programs throughout the nation

These efforts were attempts to respond to questions about quality child care, for example, Where is it? Who is providing it? How do I pay for it?

NACCRRRA was created by a show of hands at a meeting during the 1984 Annual Conference of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC). A 1997 history of NACCRRRA describes the progress of the new organization, which was incorporated in 1987. Under its energetic board of directors, the group's national office was established in Washington, DC, and Yasmina Vinci was hired as first executive director in 1993, with Linda K. Smith becoming the second executive director in 2003.

Almost two decades after its founding, NACCRRRA continues to focus on the needs of the nation's children and families through membership services, family support information, and community development by providing strategic planning, research and policy activities, and innovative partnership practices.

NACCRRRA's strategic planning activities created the following:

- A regional structure that captures geographical differences and similarities and provides the basis for Regional Institutes.
- Membership categories for agencies and individuals and multiple benefits.
- An Annual Policy Symposium, which started in 1989 and includes The Day on the Hill, when NACCRRRA members meet with their state congressional delegations.
- NACCRRRA Counts!, which started in 1994 and creates statistical reports.
- NACCRRRA Live!, which started in 1994 and sets up teleconference calls among members.
- Quality Assurance, an accreditation process for CCR&R agencies that started in 2002.

NACCRRRA's research and policy advocacy events helped create the following:

- **The ABC Bill**, 1988
- The first of annual NACCRRRA Policy Agendas and a U.S. Senate Hearing on Quality Child Care, 1994
- The National Doll Campaign, 1995

NACCRRRA's partnerships among colleagues include the following:

- The Family to Family Project, which became Child Care Aware in 1990 (see www.childcareaware.org)
- April 19th Group—organizations speaking with one voice on child care, 1993; continuing with Child Care NOW Coalition, 2005
- Healthy Child Care America, 1994
- NACCRRRAware, Web-based child care searches, 2001
- Better Baby Care, 2001

- NRex, Web-based NACCRRRA Resource Exchange, 2001
- Parent Central, 2004
- U.S. Department of Defense Operation Child Care, 2004

The selected NACCRRRA publications listed below are available online at <http://www.naccrra.org>.

Further Readings: *The Daily Parent*. (A bimonthly newsletter on topics of interest to parents of children in child care distributed to NACCRRRA member agencies who in turn make it available to the parents in their service area); *NACCRRRA Link* (2005). Quarterly membership publication; National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (1997). *NACCRRRA at ten: A Commemorative history of NACCRRRA*. Washington, DC: NACCRRRA; National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (2005). *Nurturing children after national disasters: A booklet for child care providers*. Washington, DC: NACCRRRA; *Technical Assistance Papers (TAP)*. Occasional papers on significant early care and education topics.

Edna Ranck

National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE)

The Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators was founded in 1977 at a meeting led by Michael Davis at the annual **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) conference in Chicago. The fifteen original founders were: Helen Canady, Beth Casey, Michael Davis, Stephanie Feeney, Doris Fromberg, Verna Hildebrand, Marlis Mann, Marjorie Ramsey, Clare Rodney, Judith Schickedanz, Robert Smith, Bernard Spodek, Jean Sword, Phil Wishon, and Mary Elizabeth York. In 1980, "National" was added to the name. Members are primarily domestic and international early childhood teacher educators at four- and five-year colleges and universities and those who subscribe to the purposes of the organization. In 1986, student memberships were recognized.

NAECTE was formed to promote the professional growth of its membership, advocate for improvements in early Childhood **teacher education**, facilitate the interchange of information and ideas about research and practice among its members and other persons concerned with the education of young children, and provide a communication network on early childhood teacher education issues. Through its journal, conference program, resolutions, position papers, and other publications, NAECTE helps generate an ongoing knowledge base of the field of early childhood teacher education. In addition, NAECTE collaborates with other professional associations, such as NAEYC, **American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators** (ACCESS), and ATE on issues of early childhood teacher preparation, training, credentialing, and the establishment of standards for basic and advanced teacher education programs. NAECTE has developed position statements and cosponsored position papers on issues of early childhood teacher preparation, certification standards, and ethics.

A sixteen-member governing board composed of elected officers and representatives of ten regions of the United States conduct the business of the association. In 1983, the first state affiliate was formed in Alabama, followed since then by

twenty-two other state affiliates. Regional and affiliate meetings are held annually and semiannually. NAECTE national conferences are held twice a year, usually near the date and location of the annual fall NAEYC conference and the summer professional development institute. The first stand-alone conference was held in June 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland. NAECTE cosponsors with publishers three annual awards: Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher Educator, Outstanding Early Childhood Practitioner, and Outstanding Dissertation.

The association's newsletter, the *Bulletin*, evolved into a full-fledged internationally recognized, quarterly, refereed journal in 1989. *The Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education (JECTE)* publishes original manuscripts, book reviews, research reports, position papers, letters to the editor, information on association activities, and essays on current issues and practices in early childhood teacher education. In 1996, the NAECTE Web site was established (naecte.org) and offers membership information and news about the activities of the organization. In 1998, the NAECTE Foundation (NAECTEF) became incorporated as a tax exempt 501 (c) (3) organization with three primary goals: advocate for improving early childhood teacher education; support research on early childhood teacher education; and provide scholarships to potential early childhood teacher educators. The NAECTE archive materials are located in the Rare Books Department at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana. *See also* Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education; Teacher Certification/Licensure.

Kathryn Castle

National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)

Founded in 1970, the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) has remained steadfast in its mission—"To improve and protect the quality of life for children of color and their families by giving every child a chance." With a focus on early childhood education, child welfare, elementary and secondary education, and health, the Institute accomplishes this mission by serving as a vital information resource to all individuals who work directly with children and by providing direct services at the local level through its nationwide affiliate network.

Over the years this mission to protect and improve the quality of life for children through the age of 14 has benefited millions of children through accomplishments such as the following:

- Conducting a landmark study on children in foster care which resulted in subsequent progressive national policies;
- Advocating successfully for progressive adoption policies and subsidies that permitted older and single parents to adopt;
- Working successfully to create public policy and influence legislation that directly affects the lives of African American children by testifying before Congress on every significant child-care bill from the Comprehensive Child Development Act of 1970, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the School Construction Act of 1999 to the Consequences for Juvenile Offenders Act of 1999 and orchestrating a special hearing on parenting in 2000;

- Working to gain public support to provide access to universal early care and education which has become a priority for governors in more than half of the states;
- Promoting publicly supported quality child-care programs for mothers who were entering the workforce in increased numbers, resulting in the enactment and special allocation of funds by a substantial number of states for child care;
- Implementing and expanding a community-based nationwide intervention/prevention program entitled *Entering the College Zone* from five to twenty five cities to get more disadvantaged middle-school students on the college track;
- Providing leadership to agencies like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to decrease health disparities; and
- Building and nurturing partnerships with organizations ranging from the National Education Association (NEA), the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and a number of corporations like United Parcel Service (UPS), Proctor and Gamble (P&G), State Farm Insurance Companies, and government agencies like the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Through the years, NBCDI has made tremendous strides to improve the lives of children by raising its profile in the market place to become the leading voice for children of color through the following core program areas:

- The Early Years and Parenting—*Love to Read Early Literacy Project*, *The Parent Empowerment Program*, a parenting education curriculum; *African American Parents Project*, a partnership with the National Institutes of Health that published the *Helping Children Cope with Crisis Guide*; and *SPARK: Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids*
- The Middle Years—*Entering the College Zone* to increase the number of disadvantaged students who enter college
- Community Mobilization—*The National Affiliate Network* with groups in over thirty cities

Further, NBCDI's Annual Conference is one of the leading professional development gatherings for those working to improve the lives of children, youth, and their families. Every year thousands of educators and professionals from around the country in early care and education; elementary and secondary education and administration; child welfare and youth development; research; and local, state, and federal policy convene to gain knowledge and acquire skills needed to ensure a quality future for all children and youth. For thirty-five years, Evelyn K. Moore has served as President of NBCDI.

Web Site: National Black Child Development Institute, www.nbcdi.org.

Stacey D. Cunningham

National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is the nation's leading public policy center dedicated to promoting the economic security, health, and well-being of low-income families and children in the United States. Founded in 1989 as a division of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, NCCP is a nonpartisan, public interest research organization. Using research to inform policy and practice, NCCP seeks to advance family-oriented solutions and

the strategic use of public resources at the state and national levels to ensure that the next generation of families will be economically secure, healthy, and nurturing, and have children who thrive.

NCCP put the issue of young children in poverty on the nation's conscience with the publication in 1990 of *Five Million Children—A Statistics Profile of Our Poorest Young Citizens*. In the ensuing decade, NCCP demonstrated what a difference a state makes to the economic and emotional well-being of young children through its biennial publication: *Map and Track: State Initiatives for Young Children and Families*. NCCP's 1999 book: *Lives on the Line: American Families and the Struggle to Make Ends Meet*, shattered stereotypes by describing the every day struggles of ten individual families.

As NCCP entered its second decade, the focus has expanded to include the plight of low-income families living on the edge, often a paycheck away from poverty, and the most vulnerable in society: infants, toddlers, and their families facing multiple risks for negative child development, challenging behaviors, and lack of success in school. NCCP believes that public policies can make a difference. Just as innovative policies dramatically reduced poverty among the elderly, so too can they improve the future of our nation's children and families.

NCCP works to address the following challenges, using knowledge gained from research:

- Make work pay
- Provide nurturing environments for preschoolers while their parents work
- Secure adequate health care for our nation's families
- Lift up the most vulnerable among us

NCCP addresses the specific needs of policymakers, practitioners and advocates, and the media. For policymakers, NCCP provides the right information to make good decisions, as they seek solutions to promote the health and successful development of children. For practitioners and advocates, NCCP highlights emerging challenges and offers insights about how to turn research into practice. For the media, NCCP works to uncover facts, identify trends, and analyze policy developments. This effort helps the media report on the realities faced by low-income children and families in the United States and make the links between poverty and a wide range of social issues, such as early childhood development, **immigration**, and mental health.

NCCP's Web site, www.nccp.org, provides the following tools, topics, and resources to put research to work for children and families.

- *Fact sheets* provide up-to-date state, regional, and national demographic information as well as rapid analyses of emerging issues.
- *Issue briefs* synthesize research, policy analysis, and on-the-ground knowledge in ways that help move state and local agendas. Topics include family economic security, early care and learning, health and mental health, and early childhood development.
- *State date tools* include the *Family Resource Simulator* to calculate family resources and expenses as earnings increase, taking public benefits into account; *State Profiles* for information on policy choices, demographics, and economic condition; and *Data Wizards* that allow users to build custom tables and compare states.

- Other online resources include NCCP's hosting of *Early Care and Education Research Connections*, which provides policymakers and researchers with easily accessible information about research, datasets, and instruments, and offers user-friendly syntheses and fact sheets to improve early care and education.

Web Site: National Center for Children in Poverty, www.nccp.org.

Carole J. Osbinsky

National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC)

The National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC) is an organization that advocates for and works collaboratively with university-based child-care centers and laboratory schools. The history of the NCCCC is closely linked to the history of university laboratory schools as well as the changing nature of women's roles in the workforce. In the first half of the twentieth century, early childhood programs at institutions of higher learning primarily took the form of laboratory schools. Typically, they were half-day preschool programs associated with teacher education or related academic programs. During the 1960s, two significant changes in the climate of higher education in our country affected campus children's programs. The community college system expanded, and there was a large increase in the number of adult students. Many of these were women and single parents who needed care for their children when they attended classes, and the activist climate of the era encouraged these students to demand **child care** on campus.

In the late 1960s, Rae Burrell was a student-parent at the University of California at Riverside who chaired a parent cooperative there. She saw the need for an organization to support the campus child-care movement, and applied for and received a grant from the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation in 1970. As a result, a not-for-profit organization called the Robert F. Kennedy Council for Campus Child Care was initiated. The primary goal of this organization was to promote quality child care on college and university campuses. Within a short period, a group of child-care professionals began to meet informally at conferences. As more people became involved, the focus shifted to include more professional issues, and Ms. Burrell moved to Washington, DC and coordinated several conferences there. Subsequently, annual conferences were held on college campuses and issues related to program administration and the **curriculum** also began to be included in conference agendas.

By the end of the 1970s grant money from the Kennedy Foundation was no longer available and the name of the organization was changed to the National Council for Campus Child Care. The advisory group became increasingly eager to assume more control, and when Ms. Burrell resisted, they broke away and, under the leadership of Harriet Alger at Cleveland State, a new organization began to take shape called the National Coalition for Campus Child Care (NCCCC). By 1981, NCCCC was asserting itself professionally, at **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), and with a growing membership and annual conference. In 1983, NCCCC was incorporated as a dues paying organization and a permanent office was established at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

By the late 1980's, as the focus shifted again from advocacy to education, NCCCC was recognized as a leader in the campus child-care movement and received a contract to study CCNY's sixteen campus child-care centers and another to assist the Milwaukee Area Technical Colleges. NCCCC also began to publish fact sheets, conference proceedings and special topics, and a leadership series to support the management needs of its membership and campus care directors.

In the 1990s, there continued to be a national focus on women's issues, an increase in nontraditional students on campuses, and continued concern about the quality, affordability, and availability of child care. Child care on campus took many diverse forms and children now ranged from infants through school age. Centers were administered by academic departments, human resources, student services, or other entities. In order to address the complexity of issues emerging, the Board engaged in a strategic management process to identify a plan of action. In 1996, the name was again changed to the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (still NCCCC) to better reflect the breadth of models. A home page was developed, a discussion listserv (CAMPUSCARE-L) begun, and a quarterly newsletter initiated. In 1997, 501(c) 3 status was attained. Todd Boressoff, Advocacy Committee Chair, coordinated legislative visits during the 1997 annual conference in Washington, DC; and as a result of his leadership, S. 1151, the campus based child-care bill, was introduced to the Senate, cosponsored by Christopher Dodd, Olympia Snowe and Edward Kennedy. This has led to significant federal funding for programs serving children of college students.

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Michael Kalinowski and Jane Thomas

National Committee on Nursery Schools (1925–1931)

Teachers College Professor Patty Smith Hill organized the National Committee on Nursery Schools out of her conviction that nursery schools needed to remain professionally led and grounded in research. Nursery schools grew in number from 3 to 262 between 1920 and 1930. Noting this increase, Hill organized three meetings in 1925. In May, she invited twenty-five individuals to the first meeting to discuss whether to form a new association for nursery schools. Attendees included Abigail Eliot, Edna Noble White, Helen Thompson Woolley, and Grace Caldwell. At this gathering, Hill appointed Lois Meek (Stolz) chair of the committee for subsequent meetings. At a later meeting, members decided to hold a public National Committee on Nursery Schools Conference in Washington, DC, in February 1926. The purpose of nursery schools and their role within public

education were discussed at the conference as well as ways in which nursery schools could contribute to parent education, health, and family welfare.

A second conference was held in New York City on April 22–23, 1927, and had at least 295 in attendance from multidisciplinary backgrounds (Hewes, 2001, p. 36). A third conference convened in Chicago in 1929 where members decided to press forward to form the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE now NAEYC). Lois Meek (Stolz) supported the name, claiming “we did not know whether there would always be nursery *schools*, but we knew there would always be *education* for preschool children” (Stolz, 1979). Utilizing her office at the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Lois Meek (Stolz) continued as Committee Chair of the National Committee for Nursery Education until 1931. Rose Alschuler was secretary-treasurer of the Committee and donated \$500 to maintain Committee operations (Beatty, 1995, p. 178). The Committee published “Minimum Essentials for Nursery Education” in 1929 and later developed a constitution and bylaws for NANE.

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Charlotte Anderson

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is a voluntary professional accrediting agency that has established rigorous standards for high quality educator preparation. NCATE implements a performance-based **accreditation** system in which colleges of education provide evidence that their candidates know the subject matter they plan to teach and are able to teach it effectively so that students learn. As a part of accreditation expectations, institutions must develop an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications and on candidate and graduate performance, and they use that information to improve their programs.

Teachers prepared at NCATE institutions are ready to help all students learn. These teachers know the subject matter, demonstrate knowledge of effective teaching strategies, reflect on their practice and adapt their instruction, can teach students from different backgrounds, have been supervised by master teachers, and can integrate technology into instruction.

Seven hundred of the nation’s colleges of education have chosen to seek the agency’s approval. States (forty-eight out of fifty) formally accept NCATE accreditation, and the U.S. Department of Education has determined that NCATE meets Congressionally mandated criteria for accreditation agencies. Two-thirds of the nation’s new teacher graduates are from NCATE accredited institutions.

NCATE's partnership with the states has integrated state and national professional standards for teacher preparation. The states see NCATE as a resource in standards development and implementation. A majority of states have adopted or adapted NCATE's unit (college of education) standards as their state standards for teacher preparation. NCATE's fifty state partners have adopted NCATE's national professional content standards (math, science, early childhood education, etc.) or have aligned their state content standards with NCATE's standards.

The National Association of Early Childhood Education is one of 33 national professional/policymaker member organizations that support NCATE. NCATE recognizes **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** standards for early childhood education and adopts them for use in the professional accreditation process. Teacher preparation institutions that have early childhood education programs use NAEYC standards as a core for the design and delivery of their programs. Members of NAEYC serve as reviewers for NCATE. These individuals review and rate program reports from teacher preparation institutions with early childhood education programs in states that have adopted the NCATE program standards. (States that have not adopted the NCATE program standards use standards closely aligned with the profession's program standards). The reviewers' decisions on the quality of the early childhood education programs at an institution undergoing NCATE accreditation feed into NCATE's Standard 1 on whether candidates have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help all children learn.

Web Site: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, www.ncate.org.

Arthur E. Wise

National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)

In 1989, President George H.W. Bush and the Nation's Governors announced six national education goals and a National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) composed of policy leaders was established to monitor the nation's progress in meeting the goals. Fostered by concern that the nation's educational progress was not meeting international standards and by a movement toward greater accountability, the goals were designed to uplift American education and to give focus to areas of needed progress. Indeed, the goals were widely publicized and served as the foundation for President Bill Clinton's and Secretary of Education Richard Riley's Goals 2000 legislation.

The first of these goals—*“By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn”* (Department of Education, 1995)—visibly moved school **readiness** and early childhood education onto the national agenda. Although **Head Start** and other early childhood programs had been in place for decades, with the advent of the goals a new national recognition of the importance of children's early experiences to their later school success was legitimated. For the first time, national goals firmly linked early childhood to kindergarten through grade twelve education. Adding further weight and visibility to the readiness work, structural mechanisms like the Goal 1 Resource and Technical Planning Groups were formed to carry out the NEGP's charges surrounding readiness. The Goal 1 Resource

and Technical Planning Groups made four primary contributions to the school readiness debate: (1) advancing readiness as a condition of individuals and institutions; (2) focusing on the conditions needed for children to be ready for school; (3) discerning the dimensions that constitute school readiness; and (4) highlighting the critical role of schools in school readiness.

Readiness as a Condition of Individuals and Institutions

Irrespective of whether the renewed focus was on readiness for school or readiness to learn, historically the onus for readiness was placed primarily on the child. To counter this view, the NEGP Goal 1 Resource and Technical Planning Groups adopted a broadened conceptualization of readiness, in which readiness is regarded as a condition of institutions and individuals. This conceptualization interpreted readiness as the match between the readiness of the child and the readiness of the environments that serve young children. This more contemporary understanding of readiness acknowledged that the sources of readiness are not only the child's emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and social abilities, but also the contexts in which children live and interact with adults, teachers, and other community members. To impact a child's school readiness, therefore, multiple contexts including families, schools, neighborhoods, and early childhood settings must be involved.

Readiness Conditions

Given this orientation, it is not surprising that a second contribution of the Goal 1 Resource and Technical Planning Groups was to focus on the array of contextual conditions necessary for children to be ready for school. Aided by the goals themselves, the Goal 1 Resource and Technical Planning Groups sought to build on the following three objectives that accompanied the goals.

- (1) All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school;
- (2) Every parent in the United States will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping each parent's preschool children learn, and parents will have access to the training and support parents need; and
- (3) Children will receive the **nutrition**, physical activity experiences, and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and to maintain the mental alertness necessary to be prepared to learn, and the number of low-birth-weight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems.

Using these objectives, data were collected to measure the nation's progress in creating opportunities for young children to develop and thrive, prior to school entry. This emphasis shifted the focus to include inputs as well as child outcomes as measures of readiness.

The Dimensions of School Readiness

A third contribution of the work of the Goal 1 Resource and Technical Planning Groups was to clearly specify the elements or dimensions of school readiness. The Goal 1 Technical Planning Group Report on Reconceptualizing Children's Early Learning and Development, after reviewing and synthesizing decades of research, offered a conceptualization that recognized the wide range of abilities and experiences upon which early learning and development rests. Their work, now widely accepted and used, suggests that early development and learning embraces five dimensions: (1) physical well-being and motor development, (2) social and emotional development, (3) approaches toward learning, (4) language development, and (5) cognition and general knowledge (National Education Goals Panel, 1991). Conceptualized by an expert panel for use in policymaking, this work offered a solid definition of school readiness and its underlying dimensions.

School's Role in Readiness

Given the importance of focusing on learning contexts and the institutions that impact early learning, the Goal 1 Resource and Technical Planning Group also sought to define precisely what was meant by a "ready school." This emphasis was a necessary response to the increasingly common call for children to be ready for schools and schools to be ready for children. To clarify this call for ready schools, the NEGP convened a Ready Schools Resource Group who, drawing on previous work defining successful practices for elementary schools, identified keys to ready schools (Shore, 1998). Properties of ready schools include: smoothing the transition from home to school; striving for continuity between early care and education programs and elementary schools; helping children make sense of their worlds; fostering a full commitment to the success of every child and teacher; using approaches that have been proven to raise achievement along with a focus on results; and underscoring the fact that schools are part of communities.

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Sharon Lynn Kagan

National Even Start Association (NESA)

The National Even Start Association (NESA) was formed in 1997 to provide a forum to meet the unique needs of Even Start Family Literacy providers. NESA is a membership organization that includes program administrators, professional and paraprofessional staff, and other interested parties who support the purposes of Even Start Family Literacy.

The mission of NESA is to provide a national voice and vision for Even Start Family Literacy programs. NESA works to accomplish its mission focused on the following three broad goals:

- 1 Ensure the continuity and quality of NESA leadership.
- 2 Generate awareness and support for Even Start Family Literacy Programs.
- 3 Provide professional services that support high-quality literacy instruction in Even Start Family Literacy programs.

NESA addresses its goals through a variety of activities. NESA provides assistance to its members for the development of State Chapters and on-going support for their operation. NESA has a variety of professional development activities. NESA conducts an Annual Conference that focuses on each component of family literacy—early childhood education, parenting education, and interactive literacy and adult education. NESA Academies annually bring current research in the field of family literacy to a single focus area in a research-to-practice format. NESA provides intensive training through *Keys to Quality*, a series of three-day workshops focusing on explicit content areas and designed to be presented within the specific context of Even Start Family Literacy. NESA publishes a peer-reviewed journal, the *Family Literacy Forum*, twice a year. The *Forum* provides articles that are accessible to practitioners in the field of family literacy and that connect practice with research. The research presented not only addresses issues that are relevant to instruction and program design, but also raises questions for further consideration.

Sue Henry

National Head Start Association (NHSA)

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) is a private, not-for-profit membership organization dedicated exclusively to meeting the needs of Head Start children and their families. The association represents more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff, and 2,700 Head Start programs in the United States.

Project **Head Start** began as a part of America's historic War on Poverty in 1965. Within the first ten years, supporters of Head Start had formed four affiliate organizations that represented the needs of Head Start directors, parents, staff, and friends. Directors were the first to unite (1973); they invited parents to develop a parents' association (1974); and parents, in turn, urged staff to band together (1975). Head Start friends soon followed. Each group had a different perspective but a common mission. On June 7, 1990, the four affiliates united to speak to Congress with one powerful voice. Collectively, the affiliates became The National Head Start Association.

NHSA's mission is far reaching. The association provides support for the entire Head Start community by advocating for policies that strengthen services to Head Start children and their families; by providing extensive training and professional development to Head Start staff; and by developing and disseminating research, information, and resources that enrich Head Start program delivery.

From planning massive training conferences to conducting research and publishing a vast array of publications, including the award-winning *Children and Families* magazine and the peer-reviewed research journal, *Dialog*, NHSA is educating early childhood professionals. NHSA led the way with distance training through its satellite television network, HeadsUp!, and the NHSA Academy offers college credit through self-study and off-site courses.

NHSA's 130,000 active members represent Head Start agencies; state and regional associations; commercial and nonprofit organizations; and individual parents, staff, and friends. NHSA has successfully defended the First Amendment rights of Head Start parents and staff, launched major voter registration campaigns, and proved through scientific research that Head Start increases the well-being and likelihood of success for the nation's underprivileged children and their families.

Further Readings: *Children and Families: the Magazine of the National Head Start Association* is published quarterly by the National Head Start Association. 1651 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. ISSN-7578; *NHSA Dialog* is a peer-reviewed research journal published annually by the National Head Start Association. 1651 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. ISSN 1089-2583.

Elizabeth Kane

National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

Early in its history, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC) recognized the need for a coordinated, cost-effective training system for early childhood educators and administrators. In 1992, with the help of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, NAEYC launched its first National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Since its inception, the National Institute has become an annual event that has grown from a gathering of several hundred people to more than 1600 participants. Those attending the Institute include teacher educators, program directors and administrators, policymakers, principals, researchers, curriculum and instructional coordinators, teacher mentors and coaches, advocates, early childhood specialists in local and state departments of education, and educational consultants and trainers.

The underlying goal of the National Institute is to improve early childhood services by enhancing the quality of professional preparation and training provided for individuals who care for and educate young children from birth through eight years of age. NAEYC's National Institute is designed to deepen understanding of the expanding early childhood knowledge base, help to develop skills that improve professional preparation and practice, and sharpen the ability to use effective, active learning approaches for adults. Each year, NAEYC's National Institute focuses on a new theme that represents current trends and relevant topics within the profession. Past themes have included, "The Early Childhood Profession Coming Together," "Nurturing Leaders through Professional Development," "Transforming Ideas into Action," "Building Professional Partnerships," "Exploring Difference-Building Strengths Together," and "Learning from Assessment."

The event is composed of sessions, networking opportunities, cluster groups, and other settings, all of which are planned to include diverse topics and interests.

During the Institute, attendees can choose from over one hundred sessions and workshops presented by established leaders within the field. Additionally, interactive learning opportunities allow participants to reflect on the day's sessions, raise issues, and share their own reactions with colleagues. They also provide the opportunity to network and exchange ideas with individuals who are showcasing effective approaches to professional development, high-quality early childhood programs, and new research.

NAEYC's National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development provides a unique setting in which one can learn and share with colleagues from across the country and around the world. This environment fosters teamwork, nurtures each individual's professional development, and encourages future leadership within the field. The event continues to grow and improve, each year challenging the original goals and the changing and unique needs of the profession. For more information on NAEYC and the National Institute, see www.naeyc.org.

Marilou Hyson and Kamilah Martin

Naumburg, Margaret (1890–1983)

Margaret Naumburg, a prominent figure in the “new schools” movement in the United States for six decades, was the founder of Walden School. The curriculum of this psychoanalytically based New York City educational program emphasized the creative arts and the social sciences, while fostering the development of mathematics and science skills through innovative developmentally appropriate learning experiences. In her middle years, Naumburg utilized insights gained from her study of psychology, her work in psychiatric hospitals, and her school curricular and administrative experiences as the bases of the art therapy and art education courses she developed and taught at New York University, and later at the New School for Social Research.

Naumburg received her baccalaureate degree from Barnard College, where she studied with John Dewey, beginning a lifelong educational dialogue. She received a diploma from Dr. Maria Montessori's first training course for English-speaking teachers, spent a summer exploring the Organic School with Marietta Johnson, and did postgraduate work at Columbia University. She studied Dalcroze Eurhythmics, F. Matthias Alexander's Physical Co-ordination, Alys Bentley's Correlated Movements and Music, and Dr. Yorke Trotter's Rhythmic Method of Teaching Music and incorporated aspects of these methods into the school curriculum.

Lillian Wald of the Henry Street Settlement provided the setting for Naumburg's first Montessori class. In October 1914, when Naumburg decided that a more eclectic curriculum would respond better to children's needs, she and a friend opened the nursery school class that became The Children's School. Naumburg and her colleagues, including Margaret Pollitzer, Elizabeth Goldsmith, Alvie Nitscheke, Cornelia Goldsmith, and Hannah Falk developed, assessed, analyzed and honed the school's philosophy and curriculum. Walden School, renamed in honor of the democratic tradition of the New England Transcendentalists, was built on psychoanalytic principles; attention to the balanced development of children's physical, emotional and intellectual powers; and a curriculum that evolved

from the needs of the children and promoted learning by personal experience. The students benefited from courses taught by such well-known figures as Ernst Bloch (music), A. A. Goldenweiser (anthropology), and Lewis Mumford (English).

The visual arts program, directed by Naumburg's sister Florence Cane, drew praise from educators, parents, and writers. In addition to enhancing the environment with two- and three-dimensional art works, the children were intimately involved in decorating their school walls and furnishings. Older children painted walls, doors, and room dividers for their younger schoolmates as well as themselves. Some of the students' artwork was displayed in New York City art galleries.

Naumburg was a prolific writer. Her early works include articles about **Maria Montessori**, the Gary, Indiana schools, Eurhythmics, and **progressive education**. Later works on education describe the founding and development of Walden School, its philosophy, curriculum and intellectual roots, and the physical and affective environment it provided. Naumburg also wrote several of the earliest art therapy texts in the United States.

Margaret Naumburg's life and work demonstrated a consistency of purpose and philosophy. She utilized her knowledge of and talents in the creative arts, psychology and psychoanalysis, and writing, to enhance the lives of children. She did this through her work with schizophrenic and psychoneurotic children and young people in art therapy. She left a lasting legacy to the field of early childhood education by founding and directing Walden School, and creating a faculty and staff of individuals who carried its progressive, creative ideas throughout the country and the world, into history and into action.

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NBCDI. *See* National Black Child Development Institute

NCATE. *See* National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

NCCP. *See* National Center for Children in Poverty

NCLBA. *See* No Child Left Behind Act

NHSA. *See* National Head Start Association

NHSA Dialog

The *NHSA Dialog* is a journal devoted to the presentation of research-to-practice studies relevant to the early intervention field. Papers published in the journal focus on the well-being of children and families from economically disadvantaged environments and effectively integrate research findings and application.

The need for this type of connective research is critical to achieving positive and appropriate change in child and family policy. Knowledge of child development assists policymakers in making significant decisions concerning the security, health, and growth of children and what actions will effectively impact the problems and their solutions. The *NHSA Dialog* is a translational journal that provides a forum in which to present and discuss research and, in turn, to make a useful contribution to positive child and family outcomes.

The *NHSA Dialog* was envisioned to be a vehicle for promoting closer collaboration among practitioners, researchers, and policymakers interested in child development and early childhood intervention. The mission was to produce a high-quality, peer-reviewed journal that would be relevant to the broader early childhood community. That translated into long discussions with each potential author about how to use lay language to explain their findings, searching together for applications to real-world problems facing practitioners, and exploring with them how their results might be relevant to policy decisions. In 1999, the *Dialog*'s first peer-reviewed issue was published.

At the same time, other ways of enhancing the written exchanges of ideas were explored. Through the creativity of a dedicated staff, including Gregg Powell, Ph.D., the then **National Head Start Association** Director of Research and Evaluation, Faith Lamb-Parker, Ph.D., Editor, and Katherine Rogers, Assistant Editor, two sections were added to the first peer-reviewed issue: Dialogue From the Field, and Ask *NHSA Dialog*, becoming regular sections of each subsequent issue.

"Dialogue From the Field" became the section where professionals were able to express opinions and ideas, share passions, describe innovative curricula, and relay information about current research efforts. The essays were unsolicited and represented a broad spectrum of disciplines.

In "Ask *NHSA Dialog*," researchers and practitioners were solicited to pose interesting and relevant questions that then generated lively on-paper discussions about important issues for the field. Sometimes several people would answer a single question, revealing a diverse array of opinions. Short bios were included

with the names of participating professionals to help readers better understand the points of view expressed.

Currently, the *NHSA Dialog* is published once a year and continues in its mission to provide essential, peer-reviewed research to the **Head Start** community, including researchers, administrators, policymakers, and practitioners. Manuscripts cover a wide range of topics relating to issues of children and families, including child health and mental health, family support and self-sufficiency, parenting, and policy issues.

Tara N. Weatherbolt, Faith Lamb-Parker, and Barbara M. Burns

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA)

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) of 2001. NCLBA changed the federal government's role in kindergarten through grade 12 education by requiring U.S. public schools to describe their success and effectiveness in terms of students' attainment of academic standards and performance on standardized tests. The Act contains the President's four basic education reform principles: (1) stronger accountability for "guaranteeing" results, (2) increased flexibility and local control, (3) expanded options for parents, and (4) an emphasis on teaching methods that have been "quantitatively" proven to work (<http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/next/overview/index.html>).

Among these four reform principles, "accountability" is considered as the most critical aspect. According to the U.S. Department of Education, an "accountable" education system involves several steps:

- States create their own standards for what a child should know and learn for all grades. Standards must be developed in math and reading immediately. Standards had to be developed for science by the 2005–2006 school year;
- With standards in place, states must test every student's progress toward those standards by using tests that are aligned with the standards. Beginning in the 2002–2003 school year, schools were to administer tests in each of three grade spans: grades 3–5, grades 6–9, and grades 10–12 in all schools. Beginning in the 2005–2006 school year, tests were to be administered every year in grades three through eight in math and reading. Beginning in the 2007–2008 school year, science achievement must also be tested;
- Each state, school district, and school will be expected to make adequate yearly progress toward meeting state standards. This progress will be measured for all students by sorting test results for students who are economically disadvantaged, from racial or ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English proficiency;
- School and district performance will be publicly reported in district and state report cards. Individual school results will be on the district report cards; and
- If the district or school continually fails to make adequate progress toward the standards, then they will be held accountable, and federal support will be withdrawn.

Significance for Early Childhood Education

Although the focus of the No Child Left Behind Act was on primary and secondary education, there are indications that its emphasis on test-driven accountability and quantitative definitions of outcome and impact may be carried over into early childhood education by federal and state governments. For example, several states (e.g., Ohio and Florida) already have developed preschool standards even in the subject area of social studies in line with primary grade content standards. Because states and school districts are busy working toward meeting the expectations of the NCLBA law, narrowly defined teacher accountability based on standardized content and quantitative assessment has become a politically and economically important matter to a much greater extent than previously. Early childhood teacher education programs are being asked to assess whether program content covers the state standards, and to make sure prospective teachers are familiar with the standardized state test, in the name of teacher accountability.

The No Child Left Behind Act has also resulted in additional federal legislation and mandates. In April 2002, three months after passage of the NCLBA, President Bush announced his early childhood Initiative *Good Start, Grow Smart*. This led in July 2003 to the **Head Start** Reauthorization and Program Improvement legislation, H.R. 2210, which included funding for a new assessment tool for testing 4 year olds. Concern has been expressed within the early childhood field that a standardized “one-size-fits-all” assessment tool completely ignores the diverse learning circumstances children from low-income families face.

In June 2002, the U.S. Department of Education released a report to the Congress, entitled *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge*, which indicated that teacher education programs are not producing the quality of teachers needed to support NCLBA. Citing a single study, the report concludes that teacher education does not contribute to teacher effectiveness. Critics of the report have countered that the study cited is only one of the fifty-seven empirical research studies recently synthesized by Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy (2001, 2002), all funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Critics also note that the conclusions of many of the reports differ “fundamentally from those of other reviews [funded by the U.S. Department of Education] of research on teacher preparation . . .” (Cochran-Smith, 2002, p.379). Illustrative of this inconsistency are the specifications regarding “qualified teacher” within the new law. Public Law 107-110, NCLBA section 2131 (a) National Teacher Recruitment Campaign, authorized a national teacher recruitment that would include assisting “high-need” local educational agencies. Noting that high-poverty school districts are more likely to employ teachers on waivers than more wealthy districts, the Secretary’s Report defines a highly qualified teacher as one who has obtained state certification from various alternative routes or passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in that state (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 4 and p. 34). While it has been acknowledged that alternative routes to certification offer the possibility of bringing highly qualified teachers into high demand and high-poverty school districts, critics (Cochran-Smith, 2002) also warn that the new definition of qualified teachers has the dangerous potential of instantaneously transforming unqualified teachers into qualified teachers.

Thus, not only is teacher quality narrowly defined by the Secretary's Report, student achievement is also limited to test scores. The No Child Left Behind Act requires that the standardized test results included in the annual reports of the states and school districts be used to compare achievement between students of different groups. The underlying assumption of the NCLB and the Secretary's Report is that new, "tougher" standards will ensure that no child is left behind. The concern of many educators is that rather than "leveling the playing field," comparison with such tests will, if anything, leave historically disadvantaged children even further behind as support is withdrawn from low performing schools. The irony of NCLB is its role in heightening attention to what remains, for the United States, a fundamental conflict over how to provide high-quality and equitable public education for all children.

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Eunsook Hyun

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA)

The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) is a network of educators, parents, and advocates seeking to elevate both the quality of life and the quality of schools and centers for young children. The history of this organization is rooted in the work and ideals of many dedicated individuals in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, all of whom have been inspired by the municipal early childhood programs of **Reggio Emilia**, Italy. These individuals visited the schools in Reggio Emilia, and carried back images and narratives about this powerful system of education based on a philosophy that values the potential of all children to think, learn, and construct knowledge. The first visitors returned to Reggio Emilia over and over again, leading delegations of colleagues. Supported by educators in Reggio Emilia and North America, they hosted the traveling exhibit from Reggio Emilia, *The Hundred Languages of Children*, organized conferences and courses, opened their schools for study and dialogue, and published articles and books, creating a vast network of learning inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education.

Beginning in the summer of 2000, a group of these educators met regularly and in November 2002 NAREA became an official organization. NAREA currently has a membership of over 500 educators representing communities across North America. NAREA's mission is to build a diverse community of advocates and educators to promote and defend the rights of children, families, and teachers of all cultures through a collaboration of colleagues inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

As an organization, the work of NAREA encourages the diversity of membership within the organization to include individuals from a full range of social, economic, and cultural communities. NAREA serves as a conduit for dialogue and exchange with Reggio Children and other international organizations that promote the rights of young children. The organization strengthens access to professional development initiatives and resources through communication tools. NAREA works to strengthen professional relationships among members by facilitating collaboration and exchange and creating professional development initiatives that are responsive to the needs and requests of members.

The benefits of NAREA membership include opportunities for communication and collaboration through several vehicles. Members have access to a Web site created and maintained by NAREA to provide information, resources, and a forum for the exchange of experiences and ideas among individuals interested in the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. Members also receive the official periodical of NAREA, *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange*, a periodical by the Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University, quarterly. Members participate in meetings focusing on current issues in education with the support of educators from the schools of Reggio Emilia.

Inspired by the ongoing work in schools for young children in Reggio Emilia and their forty-year history of quality education, and along with a network of alliances worldwide, members of NAREA envision a world where all children are honored and respected for their potential, their capabilities, and their humanity.

Further Readings: North American Reggio Emilia Alliance, <http://www.reggioalliance.org>; Reggio Children, <http://www.reggiochildren.it>.

Lori Geismar-Ryan and Ellen Hall

Nutrition and Early Childhood Education

Nutrition is one of the most important components in the health of young children, and poor nutrition can have a negative impact on several aspects of childhood health and development including learning. Undernutrition, often resulting from **poverty** and hunger, can lead to protein and/or energy malnutrition or a multitude of vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Although several nutrition efforts have focused on undernutrition, many countries are now faced with the alternative form of malnutrition—overnutrition. Children suffering from overnutrition and associated poor lifestyle behaviors are at an increased risk for **obesity** and chronic diseases including diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Worldwide trends in childhood overweight and obesity suggest that by 2010, using International Obesity Task Force definitions, 46 percent of school-age children in the

Americas will be *overweight* and one in seven will be *obese*. However, this issue is not limited to children in the Americas. By 2010, 41 percent of children in the Eastern Mediterranean, 38 percent of European children, 27 percent of children in the Western Pacific region, and 22 percent in Southeast Asia will be *overweight*, and one in ten children in the Eastern Mediterranean and European regions will be *obese* (Wang and Lobstein, 2006).

Recently, a national survey found that 66 percent of 2- to 4-year-old children consumed a diet that “needed improvement” and 8 percent consumed a diet that was classified as “poor.” Only 26 percent of children in this age group maintained a diet that was classified as “good” (Lin, 2005). There are several factors that have contributed to the current eating patterns of young children. Families have listed financial constraints and lack of knowledge regarding food preparation and storage as barriers to healthy eating (Hampl and Sass, 2001). Socioeconomic status greatly influences the types of foods families purchase. Lower-socioeconomic families are often at nutritional risk because they may not be able to purchase the proper types or amounts of food to support the growth and development of young children. For example, fresh fruits and vegetables are not regularly purchased by these families because they are perishable and perceived as more expensive. Fast food restaurants have become a growing concern in the American food culture because many fast foods are high in fat and/or sugar. Fast food restaurants are often attractive to parents of young children because they provide a cheap and quick source of food that their children often enjoy. Interestingly, fast food restaurants are more prevalent in lower-socioeconomic areas. An individual’s cultural identity also influences their food intake. For example, milk consumption is traditionally lower in African, Asian, and Mexican American cultures. Not only does an individual’s cultural identity influence their eating patterns, it can also influence their outlook on weight and health. Some individuals, such as Africans, Latinos, and Native Americans, view thinness with disease and overweight with health and beauty.

Healthy children between the ages of 2 and 6 years are recommended to eat in accordance with the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children (1999) and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2005). The foundation of a healthy diet consists of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables along with regular consumption of low-fat and nonfat dairy products, lean meats, and beans. The guidelines provided below were designed for Americans, but they provide basic information that can be used to facilitate healthy eating patterns in all children. Young children should consume the following foods on most days:

- 6 servings of grains [one slice of bread, 1/2 cup of rice, or 1 ounce of cereal] of which half, or at least 3 servings, should be whole grain products
- 3 servings of vegetables [1/2 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables]
- 2 servings of fruit [1 small piece of fruit, 1/2 cup of canned fruit, or 3/4 cup of 100 percent juice]
- 2 servings of dairy products [1 cup of milk or yogurt or 2 ounces of cheese]
- 4 to 6 ounces of lean meat, fish, poultry, or alternatives [e.g., peanut butter or eggs]

In addition to the specific guidelines above, other recommendations have been provided to help guide the development of healthy eating patterns in children.

For example, although 100 percent fruit and vegetable juices can contribute to fruit and vegetable needs, most needs should be met by consuming whole foods rather than juices; therefore, the intake of juice should be limited to 4 to 6 ounces per day (AAP, 2001). Also, children should consume a limited number of foods that are high in fat and/or sugar. The term “sugar” refers to caloric sweeteners including sucrose (table sugar) and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Foods high in fat and/or sugar (e.g., cake and chips) contribute calories to the diet, but they are low in nutrients such as vitamins and minerals. Therefore, these foods should not make up a large component of a child’s diet. It is also recommended that children over the age of 2 years consume low-fat dairy options to reduce total and saturated fat consumption.

Beyond basic serving recommendations, it is imperative to address the appropriate means of providing food to children. When working with children, it is important to provide a variety of healthy options to the child. If a child is only provided cookies and chips, this is what the child will eat. However, if a child is provided healthier options, the child is more likely to maintain a healthy diet. It is the caregiver’s responsibility to provide a child with food options, and it is the child’s responsibility to determine what and how much to eat (Evers, 1997). To help prevent overeating, research indicates that children should be allowed to serve themselves or be provided small serving sizes (Orlet, Rolls, and Birch, 2003). Also, adults should encourage children to eat healthy foods without pressuring them to do so. Rather than forcing or bribing a child to eat a full serving of a new food, simply encourage the “one bite rule.” Children are born with an apprehension to new foods, and it may take five to ten exposures to a new food before the child accepts the new food. In addition, children are born with a preference for sweet and salty foods; therefore, foods with other flavors may take more exposure before they are accepted. Although it is recommended to limit the intake of foods high in sugar and/or fat, these foods should not be restricted from the child’s diet (Birch and Fisher, 1998). If the base of a child’s diet consists of healthy options, moderate consumption of appropriate amounts of less healthy foods is acceptable and will contribute to a healthy eating pattern later in life.

Within the school environment, teachers can promote healthy eating through a number of avenues. Teachers can encourage their schools to adopt a policy that provides children with healthy foods. Teachers can also address healthy foods in the classroom. A classroom garden can be beneficial in discussing food origins, sanitary food practices, and nutritional content. Teachers can also provide children the opportunity to try new foods. Healthy foods can be incorporated into classroom lessons or a “tasting party” can be offered for children. When providing foods to children in the classroom, early childhood educators must avoid common allergens (e.g., eggs, cow’s milk, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish) and foods that may cause choking (e.g., grapes). If it is not possible to incorporate foods into the classroom, try other food related activities such as making placemats or teaching children to set a table. Finally, teachers can promote healthy food intake among children by acting as good role models.

Teachers can also provide families with helpful information about healthy eating within the household. For example, teachers can encourage family meals. Eating as a family is beneficial because family meals are typically planned and therefore

more nutritious than meals eaten on the go. It is also beneficial to include young children in the food purchasing and preparation processes as much as possible. For example, teachers can propose that families allow the child to pick a fruit or vegetable for dinner, perhaps as a part of a curriculum project connected with a community garden or other sources of local produce. Also, families can be encouraged to limit eating during sedentary behaviors such as watching television. Foods consumed during sedentary behaviors are often of little nutritional value, and children are often unaware of how much they are consuming during sedentary time. Teachers can also encourage parents to act as good role models. Adults can promote healthy eating behaviors by practicing appropriate eating patterns. Finally, specific programs such as **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**, **Head Start**, and Food Stamps are available to provide valuable resources to eligible low-income families.

Eating patterns begin during the preschool years, and it is imperative to promote healthy behaviors during this important developmental period. By promoting healthy eating, early childhood educators can have a significant impact on the health of children immediately and over the life span.

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Eve Essery, Nancy DiMarco, and Shannon S. Rich

O

Obesity

The World Health Organisation has identified obesity as the most visible preventable health condition related to illness and premature death worldwide. Many experts in the fields of child health and nutrition have identified childhood obesity as a critical health issue for this millennium. The dramatic growth of childhood obesity both internationally and within the United States parallels the increase in the prevalence of adult obesity. The prevalence of overweight in the United States among two- to five-year-old children has doubled during the past thirty years. High prevalence rates (some studies suggest as many as 28%) of obesity in low-income preschool children are especially alarming. This epidemic appears to be the result of many interrelated factors associated with the American culture, including increased serving sizes, increased availability of junk food, unhealthy school lunches, inadequate school physical education, scarcity of safe **playgrounds**, busy parents and increasing **television**, video game, and computer usage. While researchers were initially concerned that overweight and obesity in childhood would lead to health-related problems and disabilities in adulthood, it is now clear that there are significant health risks associated with obesity in children. Associated health risks during childhood include elevated blood pressure, orthopedic impairments such as hip and joint pain, liver disease, and diabetes. In fact, it appears that there are few organ systems that are not adversely affected by obesity in childhood, and the consequences begin during childhood.

The significant impact of childhood obesity is not limited, however, to physical, orthopedic, and skeletal problems. "The most widespread consequences of childhood obesity are psychosocial. Obese children become targets of early and systematic discrimination" (Dietz, 1998, p. 518). Widespread harassment of overweight children and weight stereotyping has been shown to begin as early as nursery school and continue throughout childhood. This rejection as well as discrimination from their peers causes young children with obesity to have poor self-esteem and may lead to depression and withdrawal, decreased physical activity, and increased emotion-induced eating. A vicious cycle is often created in

which children who are overweight or obese avoid **play**, particularly active play situations, fearing embarrassment, thus avoiding the very type of physical activity that would increase caloric expenditure and reduce or limit weight gain. Instead, such children are more often engaged in solitary and sedentary activity.

To change the behaviors of young children, interventions with schools and parents are critical. Indeed, respectful and ongoing relationships with **families** may be the most important component in the success of obesity prevention programs for preschoolers for multiple reasons. Parents influence the dietary behaviors of their children by acting as role models and teaching their children about food. The ways in which parents offer food to their children, or their child feeding practices, also influence the subsequent eating behaviors of their children. For example, child feeding practices such as pressuring children to eat healthy foods or restricting them from eating less healthy foods, have been associated with increased preferences for the restricted foods, increased dietary intake, decreased self-regulation of food intake, and increased body weight in children. Parents also play a role in the development of the activity patterns of their children by acting as role models, being physically active with their children, and encouraging or discouraging activity. When both parents are active, a child is almost six times more likely to be active than if neither parent is active (Moore et al., 1991).

Early childhood educators serve a critical role in educating the child as well as the family regarding the necessity of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, it is critical for early childhood educators to create a supportive environment for children of all sizes and shapes. By focusing on health as opposed to weight, early childhood educators create an environment in which all children feel safe to be physically active and to eat healthy. Early childhood educators can create school environments that involve developmentally appropriate physical activity, including opportunities for play and a physical education curriculum, familiarity with basic **nutrition**, and acceptance of body diversity. Within the context of the early childhood **curriculum**, young children can be taught how to garden, how to do basic food preparation, how to actively play, and how to communicate positively with one another. Early childhood educators can also educate parents on topics that facilitate a healthy lifestyle such as goal setting, time management, stress management, communication, and appropriate reward systems. Parents should be encouraged to eat as a family as this is associated with better nutrition and stronger communication. Parents and early childhood educators should also minimize the use of food as a reward or strategy for **behavior management**, as this may encourage a preference for that food as well as an unhealthy association between emotional needs and foods. Finally, early childhood educators and parents should examine their own behaviors as they serve as role models to children.

The increasing rates of obesity in our youngest children necessitate a collaborative effort between early childhood professionals and family members to instill healthy behaviors in children at a young age. The focus on healthy behaviors such as nutrition and physical activity, along with **self-esteem**, are the cornerstones of obesity prevention. Prevention is the most effective way to affect the prevalence of obesity and requires immediate action. *See also* Curriculum, Physical Development; Developmentally Appropriate Practice(s); Parents and Parent Involvement; Peers and Friends.

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OECD. See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OMEF. See World Organization for Early Childhood Education

Open Education

The term *open education* began to be widely used among preschool and elementary school educators in the United States toward the end of the 1960s, and generally referred to a set of practices exemplified in the infant schools (children from five to seven years old) in Great Britain, where it was most often referred to as “the integrated day.”

Problems of Definition

The practices alluded to by the term *open education* are difficult to define, although the literature attempting to do so is quite extensive. The formulation of an operational definition is not only difficult, but was strongly resisted by adherents at the time fearing the development of orthodoxies, doctrines, and rigidities. One widely cited definition is “a set of shared attitudes and convictions about the nature of childhood, learning and schooling” (attributed to Charles Silberman, Flurry, 1972, p. 102). The British Infant Schools were brought to the attention of Americans in a series of three articles by Joseph Featherstone that appeared in the monthly publication *The New Republic* in 1967 and later republished in a book titled *Schools Where Children Learn*. Many American educators referred to the practices encompassed by “open education” as “British Infant School,” some used labels such as “activity-centered,” “humanistic,” “child-centered,” and “progressive” education. Agreement upon which of these many terms best conveyed the desired connotations of open education was not achieved before the movement itself faded away.

An overview of the many reports and discussions of practices associated with the open education movement suggests that the term mainly served to distinguish it from the formal or closed conventional teacher-centered practices most typical of elementary education at the time. In much of the literature on open education, a strong theme is the quality of relationships among the children and between children and their teachers and the way this quality influences the climate or openness of the classroom. The relationships attributed to open classrooms were characterized by honesty, respect, warmth, trust, and humaneness.

Another source of difficulty encountered in establishing a reliable definition is the great variety of forms in which open education was implemented in the United States. Some classes were organized for mixed age groups, some were open throughout the whole day, and others only partially; still others used the term *open* to describe large spaces shared by several different classes, typically of the same age/grade level. No idea or single version of the open classroom was advocated, endorsed, or adopted by any professional group or association.

The literature on the open education movement that accumulated during the early 1970s clearly indicates that it was stimulated by the impressive developments in British infant education during the 1950s and 1960s and was given strong support in the so-called Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967).

General Features of Open Education

A review of the literature focused on open education suggests that it varies from formal teacher-centered education on the following six major dimensions: the use of space and time; sources, type, and content of children's activities; and the teacher-child relationship:

1. **Use of Space.** In varying degrees, the use of space and the movement of children, materials and equipment within it, were less routinized, fixed, or invariable in the open than in the traditional formal classrooms. In open informal classrooms, the movement of children also included locations outside of the classrooms and the school itself more frequently than in the formal classrooms.
2. **Activities of the Children.** In varying degrees, the range of encouraged and permitted activities was wider, less confined or fixed, and more open-ended in open than in formal classrooms. Activities in open-informal classes transcended the classroom itself.
3. **Source of Activity Selection.** The more open or informal the classroom, the more likely that the children's activities were pursuits, extensions, or elaborations of their own spontaneous interests, rather than activities selected solely by the teachers or a prescribed curriculum or set of standards.
4. **Content and Topics.** In varying degrees, the range of topics or content to which the children's attention and energy were guided was wider, and more open-ended than in formal teacher-centered classrooms. Content went beyond classroom, and included field studies now referred to as investigations or projects in which children study first-hand and in depth phenomena in their own environments.
5. **Time.** In varying degrees, the assignment of time for specified categories of classroom activities was more flexible in open and informal than in teacher-centered classrooms.

6. Teacher-Child Relationships.

- a) In the open classrooms, teacher-child interactions were likely to be initiated as often by the children as they were by the teachers.
- b) In the open classroom, the teacher was more likely to work with individual children than with large groups or all children in the class at one time. The more open the classroom the less often the teacher addressed the whole class as an instructional unit.
- c) In the open informal classroom, the teacher was more likely to be seen giving suggestions, guidance, encouragement, information, directions, feedback, clarification, and/or posing questions, (primarily during individual teacher-child encounters).
- d) In the open classroom, the teacher's response to undesirable behavior was likely to be to offer the child an interpretation of his actions in terms of the classroom group's life and its moral as well as functional implications. The teacher was unlikely to ignore the behavior or to exact punishment.
- e) In the open-informal classroom, teachers were likely to emphasize appropriately high standards of work as in the formal traditional classroom.

In much of the literature concerning open education, there is strong emphasis on achieving an open "climate." The specific cues by which observers judge a classroom climate are not clear. They appear to be related to the wide variety of activities to be seen; the "project-oriented" organization of the room, the active involvement of children with each other and the teacher's constant guidance, and to the encouragement and stimulation of individual and small group work.

The characteristics of open classrooms as outlined earlier could enable teachers to be more responsive to individual children's learning needs and interests. The management of time, space, and materials could provide for the individual and collaborative work that enabled children to be engaged in different activities in the same classroom. The classroom organization could indeed be flexible but was also inevitably complex. Unfortunately, teachers frequently tended to underestimate the demands of this way of teaching; such tendencies to oversimplify these demands led to ineffective educational practice. In turn, critics of open classroom practices were able to show examples of poor teaching where teachers had misunderstood the nature of the challenges and complexity of this way of working with children.

Open education gained in popularity as a set of ideals and practices during the 1960s and early 1970s. This coincided with the social optimism accompanying the civil rights movement, the establishment of the nationwide program for young children called **Project Head Start**, and the promises of increased prosperity and equality of educational opportunity. In the 1960s, there was generally a high level of confidence in national institutions, educational, financial, business, and political. However, the open education movement was relatively short-lived and at least three main factors contributed to its demise by the late 1970s: problems with accountability, teacher education, and research.

The lack of clarity in the descriptions of open classroom management and the nature of the demands on the teacher made open education practices less amenable to control and oversight by school administrators. The different ways in which the ideals of open education were exemplified and the practices were implemented made the training of teachers more difficult for those providing

courses to prepare teachers to teach this way. The variations in practice also defied any scientific research and evaluation that might have supported its continuation.

In the social context of education at the time, there was general suspicion that teachers were not taking full responsibility for actively teaching children what they should know and do. It is noteworthy in relation to public perceptions of education that schools operate within and reflect the wider society of which they are a microcosm. Societies are moved by successive waves of social, political, and national optimism and pessimism. Within the United States and the United Kingdom as well, the decline and disappearance of open education coincided with a political shift to the right, a perceived decline in educational standards, a disillusionment with the power of education to improve economic prosperity, and a move away from seeing the role of education as primarily concerned with the development of children as individuals.

In the 1980s, national opinion polls marked a considerable loss of confidence in institutions both public and private including education (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Public confidence in the nation's schools declined sharply with repeated calls for increased accountability, an emphasis on higher achievement, and "back to basics." Confidence in schools was further undermined by the report of a policy commission on education entitled *A Nation at Risk*. The report blamed the perceived national educational and economic decline on falling standards in school achievement.

Although it was influential only for a few years in the 1960s and early '70s, the open education movement left its mark on a generation of teachers and schools. Many of the same ideals are echoed in recent educational developments in early childhood education influenced by the popularity of practice in the schools of **Reggio Emilia**, the emergent and creative **curriculum**, inquiry-based and **project approaches** at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, challenging the demands of its implementation, as a set of educational practices, open education belongs to an enduring tradition of progressive educational ideals that remain as a backdrop to American educational innovation.

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Lilian G. Katz and Sylvia Chard

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental organization of thirty member countries, each committed to democratic government and the market economy. The OECD grew out of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). Under the Marshall

Plan, the OEEC administered aid from the United States and Canada to support the reconstruction of Europe after World War II. Founded in 1961 and located in Paris, the OECD provides a forum in which governments of advanced industrialized nations can compare their experiences, discuss the problems they share, and seek solutions that can then be applied within their own national contexts (Sullivan, 1997). The OECD increasingly uses its expertise to serve developing countries and emerging markets around the world. Funded by its member countries, the OECD compiles extensive statistics and regularly conducts policy analyses in fields including economics, education, labor, and social affairs.

Education has been an integral part of the OECD's work for many years. Recent activities include country reviews of education systems as well as "thematic reviews" of tertiary education, school-to-work transitions, adult learning, and financing lifelong learning. The OECD publishes annually *Education at a Glance*, a volume of comparative education indicators, and *Education Policy Analysis*, analyses of current education policy issues. The OECD also runs the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an achievement study in more than forty countries. More recently, the OECD's prolific education work has expanded to include the early years of children's lives.

Improving the quality of, and access to, early childhood education and care (ECEC) has become a major policy priority in OECD member countries. In 1998, the OECD launched a thematic review of ECEC policy with the goal of strengthening the foundation of lifelong learning. Taking a broader and more holistic approach than previous cross-national studies, the review provided a comparative analysis of major policy developments and issues in twelve OECD countries—Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Since the completion of the first phase of the review in 2001, eight additional countries have been reviewed: Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Korea, and Mexico. Country-focused background reports and policy analyses are available at <http://www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood>. In addition, the study's comparative report, *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care* (OECD, 2001) analyzes recent policy developments, highlights innovative approaches, and proposes policy options that can be adapted to different national contexts.

As an international organization, the OECD complements the role of ministries, research institutions, and think tanks by documenting recent developments in the ECEC field and providing a comparative framework with which to analyze current policies. Highlighting innovative policies and practices of other nations also may challenge national decision makers to see their own policies in a new light and consider fresh alternatives. Perhaps most important, OECD activities have brought together policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and advocates from member countries to exchange diverse perspectives on how to improve the care and education of young children. These national and international policy discussions have fuelled important ECEC reforms that will need to be monitored and evaluated in the coming years.

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John Bennet and Michelle J. Neuman

Osborn, D. Keith (1927–1994)

Dr. D. Keith Osborn was a pioneer in the field of early childhood education in the United States. Osborn earned his bachelor's degree at Emory University, a master's degree in early childhood education at the State University of Iowa, and a doctoral degree at Wayne State University. At the time of his teaching in 1950, Osborn was one of only a few male faculty members in the field of early childhood education.

In 1965, he was the Chairman of the Division of Community Services at the Merrill-Palmer Institute in Detroit, Michigan, where he served for 16 years. In February 1965, he became the Chief Educational Consultant to Project **Head Start** and later a member of the Head Start Planning Committee (Califano, 1997). Concerning the "War on Poverty," the Johnson administration called for "special programs devised for four- and five-year-olds, which will improve the child's opportunities and achievements" (Hymes, 1979, p. 32). Project Head Start emerged as the answer to that call.

Designed as a comprehensive program to be implemented in the summer of 1965, Osborn was called on for his expertise in early childhood education. Specifically, he and his colleagues on the planning committee for Head Start initiated trends such as reduced class sizes for young children, on-site support consultants, and university preparation programs for teachers of young children that have had a long-lasting influence on the field of early childhood education. Osborn was especially instrumental in the initial training of teachers in Head Start as well as the design of high quality early childhood classrooms that support the development of the whole child. Training in early childhood education, as advanced by Professor Osborn, was important from the assistant in the classroom to the university faculty member. Osborn's initial writings on the outcomes of Head Start (archived at the Merrill-Palmer Institute) noted the importance of continuity of high-quality educational environments once children left Head Start. These assertions supported the need for research on programming for young children, including Head Start, to validate the efforts and best practices of early childhood educators.

Osborn, in a printed interview, highlighted his beliefs about the contributions that he made to Head Start that included a focus on the whole child, helping teachers see the importance of including parents, and mechanisms for regional training support. Such support exists to this day in the training and technical staff offices for Head Start and **Early Head Start** in the ten regions of the United States.

Osborn's professional contributions also include service on the planning committee for the Children's Television Workshop, the President's Council on Early Childhood Education, and the President's Council on Television. His work on

these committees influenced his research on television violence and young children's perceptions of television. Osborn advocated for changes from the television industry as well as the role that families play in moderating their children's television viewing. His work with early childhood educators focused on practical and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies, including books from the 1950s to the 1970s on cognitive activities, creative activities, and classroom management.

Osborn served as vice president for the **Association for Childhood Education International** (ACEI) from 1959 to 1961. He was a professor of education and child development at the University of Georgia for twenty-six years. Osborn's written work carefully accounted for the history of early childhood education and child development and its influence on current and future practice. In his text, *Early Childhood Education in Historical Perspective*, Professor Osborn chronicled the influences on early childhood education in the United States. His work extended to examining educational experiences for underrepresented groups. Osborn's scholarly record included more than 600 presentations to professional groups and over 100 publications. *See also* National Head Start Association.

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Stacey Neubarth-Pritchett, Charlotte Wallinga, and Boyoung Park

Owen, Grace (1873–1965)

Grace Owen was honorary secretary of Britain's Nursery School Association from 1923 to 1933. Owen was a pivotal figure at the City of Manchester Training College for nursery school teachers and ran the Manchester nursery school in the 1920s. When Abigail Adams **Eliot** visited the school in 1921, she described Owen as "scientific and 'broad-minded'" (Beatty, 1995). Owen was a graduate of Teachers College and sister-in-law of psychologist James McKeen Cattell. She was instrumental in the creation of a "federation" of the Child Study Association, the Educational Guild, the Educational Handiwork Association, the Froebel Society, and the Nursery School Association in 1925. Owen also played a key role in designing the Nursery School Association's "Suggested Scheme of Training" for teachers.

In her classic book on *Nursery School Education* (1920), Owen notes that "nearly half of English three and four-year-olds were being perched miserably on wooden benches, chanting the alphabet" (TES Web site) in schools which "laid a deplorable emphasis on definite instruction given to rows of children seated in galleries, kept in order by strict . . . discipline" (Owen, p. 11–12). In opposing these practices, Owen was committed to the notion that "careless gaiety and bubbling fun are true evidences of the untrammelled spirit, and where these are absent, there is something wrong" (p. 24). She lauded the Education Act of 1918

as evidence that “the country as a whole has . . . perceived that all schemes of national reconstruction . . . are based on shifting sand if the young life of the nation is not sound, healthy and well-developed during the first critical years” (p. 15). Owen was optimistic that the Act’s proposed Nursery School would not be “hampered by the traditions of past generations” and thus “free to work out its own salvation” (p. 15).

Nursery schools were to be “included in every housing scheme” (p. 14) and open to all children over the age of two. Owen believed these should “secure . . . freedom from nervous strain, and happy occupation for all children” (p. 13), counteracting the effects of “Narrow streets and hard pavements, ill built houses and drab and meager home conditions” (p. 23). Other benefits of the nursery included “grown-up friends who have plenty of time to play with [the children], answer their questions, and wait for them while they slowly learn to perform all the little duties of their daily lives,” since “The intelligent child has more bodily and mental activity between the ages of two and six than can be easily satisfied by the very busy people with whom he lives, most of whom do not understand what he does, or wants to know, is at all important” (p. 20).

The nursery school Owen envisioned included “a garden . . . because it is for the child an infinite source of ideas of life, growth, form and colour . . . it calls out his early sympathies” (p. 23) and a “sunny aspect.” Owen specified further details of this nursery school, such that “time-tables are abolished” (p. 17) and “the numbers of children . . . in a single Nursery School is strictly limited by the need for individual care and an intimate personal relationship between the children and the mother of the group” (p. 21).

Owen pointed to other virtues of the nursery school experience: “The daily habits that have to be learned . . . are not nearly so difficult and irksome when others are sharing the experience . . . much that is a real trial when done at home is accomplished with enthusiasm when it is part of the Nursery School routine” (p. 20). And “the growing instinct of self-assertion—healthy in itself—is kept in due check by the absorbing interest of living with other children, and the necessity for the spirit of give-and-take which it involves” (p. 21). In addition, “Generous impulses . . . and habits of considerate action can be encouraged and these will surely have their effective influence on that future day when the real fight with selfish impulses must take place” (p. 24).

Owen further asserted “instruction in the Nursery School . . . has no place. No reading, writing, no number lessons should on any account be required—no object-lessons . . . should be allowed, for the time for these things has not yet come. Up to the age of six the child is usually fully occupied in mind and body with learning from actual experience . . . he is experimenting with his limbs, sense, hands, in a thousand ways. But should he show spontaneously a great desire to learn to write or read, he should not be thwarted . . . yet no special encouragement should be given—for the energy thus used is diverted from direct experience” (p. 25).

Testing and standard assessments were also emphatically forbidden in Owen’s nursery school. “All test of progress should be rigidly excluded. . . . The Nursery School has nothing to do with standard results as known in the elementary school” (p. 25). Rather, learning is evident through children’s “healthy growth of

body, increase of physical control and power of sustained attention, multiplying interests, and happy freedom in creative activity” (p. 25). With reference to the training of nursery school personnel, Owen (1920) asserts, “the teacher may or may not be specially trained” (p. 17).

Although Owen recognized that “the right conditions and equipment . . . will bring an increase in expenditure per head so far considered sufficient for young children . . . it is the time to throw aside half measure, and spend ungrudgingly in an unsparing effort to put the feet of the children of the coming generations firmly on life’s path. May public opinion not be found wanting!” (p. 16). *See also* Child Study Movement; Froebel, Friedrich.

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Gay Wilgus

Owen, Robert (1771–1858)

Robert Owen, industrialist, philosopher, and social and educational reformer, was also the creator of what can be considered the first employment-related early childhood care program in the Western world. But Owen’s “Infant School” was far more than a care program for the children of working parents, it was allied with a broader undertaking, the New Institution for the Formation of Character (1816), both located in New Lanark, Scotland.

Owen was born in Newton, Montgomeryshire, Wales, in 1771. By the age of seventeen he was employed in the drapery trade in Manchester, a city that would become the epicenter of the English Industrial Revolution. By 1799, Owen and two partners were in a position to purchase the textile mills of David Dale in New Lanark. Dale (Owen’s future father-in-law) and Owen were both progressive in their views as employers, with particular interests in the welfare of children.

In the early 1810s, Owen visited Johann **Pestalozzi** at Yverdun, as had many other progressive thinkers and educators—indeed, Friedrich **Froebel** lived in Yverdun from 1807 to 1809 (Pence, 1980). By 1812, Owen’s ideas regarding education and development had begun to take form and were presented in his first public speech in 1812, which was followed by his first publication in 1813, *The First Essay on the Principle of the Formation of Character*. At the core of his thought was the environmentalist belief that “the constitution of every infant, except in case of organic disease, is capable of being formed or matured, either into a very inferior, or a very superior being according to the qualities of the external circumstances allowed to influence that constitution from birth” (Owen, 1842, p. 1).

Owen’s *First Essay* was followed by three others (1813–1814) and collectively they comprise his *A New View of Society* (1816). In that book, Owen takes

issue with the excesses of capitalism and the failure of the Church to play an appropriate and effective role in stemming such excesses.

Owen called on society and, in particular, those in positions of wealth and influence, to address the need for social change. New Lanark became his own experiment in ways in which the “constitutions” of individuals might be improved for the betterment of all. Owen’s New Institution for the Formation of Character included as part of its structure an Infant School, which accepted children from the age of eighteen months. There were approximately eighty children enrolled in the Infant School in 1816, with both a male and a female teacher.

Owen did not believe that children of such a young age should receive formal instruction.

“The children were not to be annoyed with books, but were taught the uses and nature of qualities of the common things around them by familiar conversation, when the children’s curiosity was excited so as to induce them to ask questions respecting them.” (Rusk, p. 134)

The Infant School teachers were trained that “they were on no account ever to beat any one of the children or to threaten them in any manner.” Owen’s son, Robert Dale Owen, who later taught in the New Institution, confirmed that “all rewards and punishments, whatever, except such as Nature herself has provided . . . are sedulously excluded as being equally unjust in themselves and prejudiced in their effects” (Salmon and Hindshaw, p. 25).

Owen’s Infant School was the first of what became a broader movement in the 1820s in the United Kingdom, in North America, and more broadly. Owen’s pedagogical approach was, however, not adopted by all such programs, many of which followed a more restrictive, instructive monitorial model. Owen was himself a part of the “internationalization” of the Infant Schools process, establishing an Infant School in the utopian community he helped found and fund at New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825.

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Alan Pence

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Parental Substance Abuse

Adult behavior can have a profound effect on child development and behavior. Data from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE) suggests strongly that children are affected in a variety of ways by exposure to such adult risk factors as mental illness, especially depression, alcohol and/or drug abuse, and domestic violence. These adult risk factors have been linked to their child's behavior, including childhood depression and other child mental health concerns, risk-taking behavior impacting school and peer relations, and self-regulatory behavior problems. The probable co-morbidity of these adult risk factors suggests that children are likely to grow up in homes with multiple risk factors, for example, living with a depressed mother who uses drugs to self-medicate her painful affect or growing up in a family where alcohol use exacerbates an abusive relationship between the parents. The ACE data indicate a *correlation rather than causation* between adult risk factors and child behavior, providing evidence that each child's genetic makeup, **temperament**, and environmental factors impact outcomes for individual children.

Children of parents who abuse substances are themselves at double jeopardy for becoming addicts; they may have a biological predisposition for use of substances, especially alcohol, and they are more at risk for experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse as young children. These two forces— the biological and the environmental—often predict a child's risk for their own substance abuse as a way of dealing with the trauma of their early maltreatment. This vicious cycle of parental substance abuse increasing the risk for physical and/or **sexual abuse** in childhood creates generational patterns of addiction in families. Thus identifying and intervening early in the lives of children experiencing such a significant adult risk factor as substance abuse is critical to individual child development.

Addiction

Addiction has been described as a chronic, progressive, and potentially fatal disease with characteristic signs and symptoms. Addiction does not reflect amoral

behavior or a lack of willpower—it is a characteristic of the disease that most addicts cannot stop their substance use without treatment, regardless of their desire for sobriety. The hallmarks of addiction are a loss of control over substance use and continued use despite negative consequences. These three aspects of addiction—chronic use, loss of control, and use despite negative consequences define addiction and answer many of the questions posed by providers and early childhood professionals. Why did she continue to use during her pregnancy? Why did she spend the food money on drugs? Why are her children so angry and out of control now that she is out of detox?

Many adults use drugs and alcohol to mediate their own painful affect in the face of the guilt, shame, and/or rage in their lives. And their children feel powerless to protect their parent(s), shame about having to make excuses for their parent's behavior, or anger at the lack of consistent care giving and nurturing that all children need. A significant proportion of adults engaged in substance abuse report having been sexually abused as children. To numb their own pain, these children begin to use drugs that then increase their shame and feelings of self-loathing and guilt. And so the cycle continues.

The Impact of Substance Use on Child Development

This cycle of substance abuse and trauma directly affects children's daily lives. Children live with the unpredictability and chaos of parents who cycle through binges and crashes. They learn to take the emotional temperature of the house—*who is using, who is sleeping in the house, who is angry*. They live with the effects of their parents' emotional numbing that leaves little energy left for nurturing and protecting children. They often feel isolated, alone, and confused by the inconsistent care from various caregivers who may frequent the house or from well-meaning relatives who often enable the parents' drug use. They may experience several out of home placements while their parents struggle with their addictions. This recurring theme of emotional unavailability and abandonment is a potent one for children living with parents who abuse substances.

Children also live with family secrets of shame, guilt, and fear. People with addictions become preoccupied with getting and taking drugs to the exclusion of all other needs and responsibilities, including taking care of themselves and parenting their children. They don't provide adequate food, they are unable to organize themselves to get children ready for **child care**, and they cannot help their children negotiate the daily events in their lives. While some children withdraw in the face of these negative experiences, others express their concerns with rage and aggression. They learn the don'ts: don't trust adults, don't talk about what's going on at home, and don't feel anything about their experiences. To cope with this pain and the unpredictability of their lives, many children themselves turn to drugs as a way of overcoming their sense of powerlessness, low self-esteem, and social failure. Adult children of alcoholics report missing out on childhood because they assumed the role of caring for their parents or younger siblings. Living with a parent who is addicted poses significant challenges to the development of trust, attachment, autonomy, and modulation of effect for children.

Trust and attachment. The role of parental **attachment** figures is to provide consistency, security, and limits for children while helping them develop internalized, integrated constructs for the self in relation to others. But children who are struggling with issues of trust rising from their sense of abandonment, loss, inconsistency, and lack of appropriate boundaries within their families create disordered models for attachment. They either connect indiscriminately to anyone who will pay attention to them (“any warm body will do”) or they reject all attempts by adults to nurture and set limits for them. Without experiencing a deep-felt sense of trust within a primary relationship, they internalize a model of mistrust that makes it difficult to connect to other adults who might support them such as teachers or foster parents.

Autonomy and self-esteem. Parents struggling with their own addictions are often unable to help their children successfully resolve such salient issues of family development as attachment, autonomy, individuation, and eventual independence. They place unreasonable demands on their children, leaving them with feelings of self-doubt and failure. The children believe that if they were only good/smart/pretty enough, everything would be better. The family secrets they carry make it hard for them to connect to other caregiving adults outside the family, worrying that their secrets might be betrayed, or worse, that they themselves are part of the secret. They struggle to be autonomous, but worry about balancing their own self-care with their caregiving responsibilities to their parents and younger siblings. They have very low **self-esteem**, and, as with most self-fulfilling prophecies, act out against or withdraw from the very people who might help them—their teachers, counselors, pediatricians.

Modulation of affect. Although adults use substances to break down their inhibitions or to feel better about themselves, the main effect of continued alcohol or drug use is to numb feelings, leaving people unable to identify their feelings or to match their feelings to appropriate social situations such as frightening or sad events. As parents, they have an extremely difficult time identifying or labeling emotions for their children, modeling appropriate feeling states, or helping their children deal with emotions in a socially acceptable way. Thus children of addicts are often emotionally volatile and labile, unable to modulate their own feelings of sadness, anger, or fear. Their ability to maintain their attention, focus on the tasks at hand, and follow rules can be challenged by their internal disorganization, arousal states, and such environmental influences as excess noise and the movement of other children, or emotionally laden sounds such as police sirens.

Prenatal exposure. Much is still unknown about the effects of prenatal cocaine exposure. Research on prenatal marijuana and tobacco exposure suggests that, even if no drug effects are found between the ages of six months and six years, the increasing cognitive demands and social expectations of school or puberty may unmask a series of risks from exposure not previously identified. Cumulative environmental risk and protective factors may also exacerbate or moderate negative cognitive and behavioral outcomes as children mature. Among children aged

six years or younger, there is no convincing evidence that prenatal cocaine exposure is associated with developmental toxic effects that are different in severity, scope, or kind from the sequelae of multiple other risk factors. Many findings once thought to be specific effects of in utero cocaine exposure are correlated with other factors, including prenatal exposure to tobacco, marijuana, or alcohol, and the quality of the child's environment.

Long-term studies using sophisticated assessment techniques indicate that prenatally exposed children may have subtle but significant impairments in their ability to regulate emotions and focus and sustain attention on a task. These neurobehavioral deficits may place these children on a developmental pathway that leads to poor school performance and other adverse consequences over time. Thus the impact of addiction on children might best be understood as an environmental effect, focusing more attention on inadequate/poor parenting, poverty, institutional racism, stress, community violence, and a chaotic, disorganized life style. These factors alone, independent of drug exposure, can lead to poor developmental outcomes for young children. And when these developmental outcomes are confounded by prenatal substance exposure, children are at much higher risk for experiencing the double jeopardy of substance exposure and poverty. Prenatal exposure may impact their ability to modulate their affect; the chaotic postnatal environment then exacerbates that inability by neglecting to provide kids with appropriate boundaries, predictable routines, or the comfort of familiar adults.

Breaking the Cycle: Interventions

Parental substance abuse intensifies the already well-recognized environmental hazards of poverty, violence, homelessness, depression, inadequate or abusive parenting, and multiple short-term foster placements. The best way to help children is not only to address their particular behavior or developmental problems but also to intervene to change the environmental influences that negatively affect the child. In other words, the best way to help a child is to help the parent recover. Supporting the development of a young child living with a substance-abusing parent requires a two-generational model of care by considering adult risk behavior as a critical component in addressing the development and behavior of children.

Intervention approaches for young children with language delays, attachment disorders, regulatory concerns, attention disturbances, and motor problems have been well documented in the early intervention literature and are very effective for children impacted by parental substance abuse. But the challenge for providers is to understand the child's behavior within the context of the family's relationships and their ability to function. Providers must think carefully about the environment in which the child lives before deciding on an intervention approach. For children of addicted parents, their behavior may have much less to do with the early intervention or classroom environment than with the internal neurobehavioral mechanisms that control affect, attention, and arousal. Providers cannot plan strategies for a "disruptive" child without considering the family factors. Providers need training and ongoing supervision to be able to ask hard questions about family history and child-rearing practices in culturally sensitive ways. For example,

providers might ask a parent “Who does your child remind you of? Do you think you (or his father) acted like this in preschool?” The answers to these questions provide significant insight into how the family sees the child, their expectations for her/his behavior, and issues that might be impacting the child at home.

The Role of Children in Their Parent’s Recovery

The birth of a baby can present substance abusing parents with a wide open window of opportunity. Children can be a powerful motivating force for parents to examine their behavior, to have the strength needed to enter treatment, to consider a different life for themselves and their family. A new baby can also precipitate a crisis that forces family members to confront the substance abusing parent. Family-focused interventions for addicted parents and their young children require a delicate balancing act in which providers must consider both the adult’s needs and those of the child. Treatment that focuses exclusively on the adult or the child ignores the power of the parent–child dyad and the advantages that can come from changing the family system.

The challenge in providing family-focused interventions is literally to get the parent’s attention and to develop a therapeutic relationship with them. The ability to form these alliances is based on the severity of the parent’s addiction, their level of denial, potential for relapse, and the presence of concomitant psychiatric concerns. These problems also interfere with the ability of the provider to model behavior, give information, and help the parents support their baby’s self-regulation, developmental skills, and emotional health. Yet, there are many advantages to family-focused interventions for parents struggling with addiction. At the onset of drug treatment, the parent–child relationship can sustain the parent through the difficult early detoxification and rehabilitation period. Providers can use the baby’s behavior as a vehicle to reach the parent and begin to establish a therapeutic relationship with her around her concerns for her child. Infants demonstrate a wealth of behaviors that indicate their feelings, their connection to the people around them, and their development. By smiling exclusively for her father or no longer crying when his mother picks him up, infants use these preferential signals to indicate to the parent how central he/she is to the child (“when he sees you, his whole face lights up”). Second, children provide a powerful basis for examining a parent’s life decisions and choices. Simply asking why a particular name was chosen for the baby gives enormous insight into the life experiences and family history. (“She’s named for my grandma who raised me after my mom left; he’s named for his father in prison”). As they talk about their children, parents narrate their own lives, offering providers a chance to empathize with traumatic events, to correct misconceptions, and to support the parent’s vision for the future.

And while children can be a significant source of pride and self-esteem for parents, they can also be triggers for anger, repressed memories, relapse, or depression. Teaching parents basic child development can help them understand that when their child cries for them when they leave, the child is not spoiled, but missing the person who is so central in his life—his parent. Issues of abandonment are often pivotal in the lives of addicts. By helping them to see their role in

supporting their child's growing independence, providers can help them to place new meaning on events in their own lives, on how they understand and interact with their children, and on how they respond to their own losses, anger, and pain. Finally, children offer addicted parents hope for a future in which they can attain sobriety and maintain their family; in other words, a better life for themselves and their children.

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Margot Kaplan-Sanoff

Parenting Education

Parenting education refers to the process of increasing adult knowledge and skills about the development of parents and of children so as to enhance child-rearing practices and strengthen the parent-child relationship. It works on the assumption that parents can change and become better parents, and that parenting styles and practices can be modified to benefit children, parents, and families. The goals of parenting education are multiple, including improving parenting skills, the prevention of **child abuse and neglect**, the promotion of children's health and school **readiness**, and the personal growth of parents. Because research shows that racial and socioeconomic differences in parenting practices impact differences in children's **cognitive development**, parenting education is also proposed as a strategy to address the achievement gap.

The many parenting books, magazines, television shows, and Internet sites indicate the strong interest parents have for information and support. A national survey of American adults conducted in 2000 reported that one third of adults felt very unprepared and another third only "somewhat prepared" for parenthood (DYG, Inc., 2000). In addition, the survey revealed significant gaps among parents and other adults in their knowledge of the development of children newborn to age six. Better educated parents and those with higher incomes are more knowledgeable of current child development theories than those who are less well educated and have lower incomes; and fathers are less well informed than mothers. Although most parents turn to other family members for information and support on parenting, parenting education is typically available through community-based programs.

Parenting education in the United States has a long history that can be traced back to the seventeenth century. During the colonial period, much of the available practical advice on infant and child care focused on the moral and religious upbringing of children. The next two hundred years witnessed an increase in the number of American authors publishing parenting education materials; a shift to content that was both developmental and spiritual in nature; and the creation of mothers' groups as a mode of conveying information and advice.

With the growth of industrialization and immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, social reformers became concerned about child-rearing and "mothering," particularly in poor families. Their efforts took various forms, including visits to families by social workers and the development of settlement houses that offered multiple services to immigrant families. This period also saw the establishment of various parent education organizations, including the National Congress of Mothers in 1897 (today called the PTA). Mass media outlets began to carry materials for parents including publications like *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies Home Journal* (Schlossman, 1976). In the 1960s War on Poverty, a new wave of parenting education programs flourished. By the mid-1970s, a number of individuals and groups initiated programs with many of the characteristics associated with contemporary family support and parenting education. These characteristics include a goal-oriented framework for parenting education, sustained and comprehensive support to young families, referrals to other services, child development services, and a climate that engages parents to share and explore child-rearing beliefs and practices.

As was the case with historical attempts to change parenting practices, contemporary parenting education and support programs rest on the assumptions that early childhood is a critical period in the development and that the home is a critical context in which development takes place. By providing parents of young children with information about and support for child rearing, programs increasingly reject the notion of *parens patriae*—that either the state or the family alone are accountable for children—and embrace the idea that fostering children's development is the mutual responsibility of the family, the state, and the broader community.

Studies of the family and child development confirm the need for parenting education and support. For example, it is widely recognized that warm, reciprocal parent-child relationships foster children's cognitive development and social competence. Hart and Risley (1995), for example, found that parenting from birth to age three is especially critical to children's language development and their future academic performance. However, of great concern to policy makers are findings from such research about the impact of poverty on parenting and child outcomes. By having parents who talked to them more often, children from professional families showed dramatically greater rates of vocabulary growth and also richer forms of language use and interaction than children from welfare families. The implication of studies such as these is that, by the time poor children enter preschool, they are already disadvantaged compared with their middle-class peers.

The timing of **poverty** in children's lives appears as one important dimension with long-lasting effects—and significant implications for parenting education. Being poor during the preschool years correlates with low rates of high school

completion, as compared with poverty during the childhood and adolescent years. The home environment in particular mediates the effects of poverty on children. Income instability and the chronic stresses of poverty are associated with maternal depression, which, in turn, is related to more punitive and less nurturing parenting behaviors, and, subsequently, preschool children's lower levels of cognitive development and increased behavioral problems (McLoyd, 1995). In response to these findings, it has been suggested that parenting education focus on reading to children and providing them with stimulating learning experiences in order to improve children's cognitive development; to reduce children's behavioral problems, parenting programs should focus on parenting skills and improving parents' psychological well-being; and to promote children's healthy development in multiple domains, comprehensive social supports be offered to families (Yeung, Linver and Brooks-Gunn, 2002).

Certain community factors may counteract the negative outcomes of poverty and other life stressors. Parents' social networks buffer negative parenting as friends, neighbors and kin provide emotional, informational and parenting support as well as role modeling. Parents who receive more emotional support and have a heterogeneous social network exhibit more warmth and responsiveness, offer a more stimulating cognitive home environment and feel more effective as parents than their counterparts with fewer and more homogenous social networks. Children who overcome adversity come from families that are caring and supportive, maintain high expectations, and provide opportunities for meaningful participation in the family (Benard, 1991). For parents to create these environments families must exist in supportive communities. The notion that "it takes a village to raise a child" situates parenting education in a broader ecological framework of community-based support and social service system change.

Models

Parenting education is best represented as a series of overlapping approaches and strategies. Programs might range from intensive interventions focused on highly specific objectives over several months to multiyear initiatives that provide a range of services over a longer period of time. Cultural characteristics such as family communication styles, routines, and parenting practices also carry implications for parenting programs. Parenting programs are charged with the task of aligning with family cultural styles and material circumstances, while simultaneously conveying middle-class practices that are associated with children's cognitive and socioemotional development. To do this effectively, programs define their own underlying values as well as build on the characteristics, constraints and opportunities of specific groups including immigrant populations, parents of children with special needs and fathers.

Parenting education programs can be classified into three general models: those that provide parenting and other supports solely to parents; those that provide services to parents through their involvement in educational services offered to their children; and those that unite these two components. A large part of what we know about parent education programs comes from evaluations of intervention programs based on each of these models.

Parenting support models rely on professional or paraprofessional staff to provide information and support about parenting and child development. Meetings may take place within the home environment (home visiting) or in other settings. In this model the focus is on helping parents fulfill their role as parents and educators of their children.

Parent involvement models are usually center-based and primarily provide an educational curriculum to preschoolers or infants and toddlers. Recognizing the sustained effects of parent involvement in early education, these programs include parent support groups, offer parenting classes and conduct parent meetings. Often the content of this model focuses on children's educational development.

The "two-generation" approach combines services for parents with child-focused curricula. Some of these programs provide integrated and comprehensive services for poor families. They combine work experiences and job training, social services, parenting education and child care.

Evaluation

Are parenting education and support programs effective? Several evaluations point to mixed and conditional results. Evaluations of six major home visiting programs point to some benefits in parenting and the lack of large and consistent benefits in child development. Most of these programs, however, struggled to implement services according to the program design and to engage families. Failure to deliver the intended number of home visits and substantial attrition rates likely affected program outcomes (Gomby, Culross, and Behrman, 1999). Home visiting in poor families is also more likely to help those who are well-functioning rather than those with severe, multiple problems (Larner et al., 1992).

Head Start is the most well-known example of the parent involvement model. Quasi-experimental studies reveal short and long-term effects on cognitive ability and school performance. However, the specific impact of Head Start's family involvement and parenting education programs is less well studied. Another example of the parent involvement model, the Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC), is a comprehensive preschool program for low-income children in Chicago. Results of a longitudinal study showed that children who participated in CPC had more years of completed education, and that parent involvement was the most important program predictor of children's early and later school related outcomes (Clements, Reynolds, and Hickey, 2004).

Two-generation programs tend to be the most successful in promoting long-term developmental gains for children from low-income families (Yoshikawa, 1995). Early Head Start, one example of this approach, provides parent education and educational child care, and is implemented in center-based and home-based settings. A longitudinal randomized evaluation finds positive child outcomes in cognitive, language, and social emotional development. Early Head Start parents showed increased support for children's language development and learning and had lower rates of punitive discipline practices (Raikes, Love and Chazan-Cohen, 2004).

Although much research has focused on outcome evaluation, it is equally important to understand program characteristics and the process by which an

intervention brings about its various outcomes. A synthesis of process evaluations of various home visiting programs found variation in program success by who delivered the services (e.g., professional vs. paraprofessional staff) and the connections between those workers and the families they visit. In the Early Head Start evaluation, experimental effects were greatest in the sites rated with the highest level of implementation (Love et al. 2002).

Conclusion

Parenting education assumes that parents can and should change the ways they rear their children. While parenting is malleable it is also very difficult to change. Although the outcomes of parenting education and support programs tend to be modest, stronger outcomes are observed with programs are characterized by previously described best practices (McCartney and Dearing 2002). This finding provides good reason for society to invest in well-designed programs and to fund them at levels that ensure quality implementation. Changing parenting is also complex and value-laden, and influenced by social and cultural contexts that lie beyond the purview of parenting education programs. This suggests the need of a comprehensive national family policy of which parenting education is an important part. Such a policy would encompass workplace changes to meet the needs of parents of young children, parental leave policies, parenting education, quality early childhood education, and affordable health care. For all those concerned about healthy parenting and child well-being, the road ahead lies in building the political will to effect this policy transformation. *See also* Parents and Parent Involvement; Peers and Friends.

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M. Elena Lopez and Margaret Caspe

Parents and Parent Involvement

Parents provide children with the care they need to survive and become culturally competent. **Attachment**, the emotional tie between a child and caregiver, is universal, but the goals and patterns of child-rearing vary both between and within cultures. The parental role may be carried out by someone other than the biological parent (i.e., adoptive or grandparent). **Developmentally appropriate practice** calls for effective partnerships between early childhood educators and parents.

Parenting

Human evolution has resulted in behavioral systems in both children and their caregivers that prepare children for life in their particular culture. Newborns arrive with the capacity to cry when they feel discomfort, attend alertly to a human face, and root and suckle on a breast to get nourishment. These capacities in babies are universal and seem to be designed to engage responsive care from an adult. As they grow older, children further rely on parents to engage them in learning language, solving problems, and relating to others. Parents typically provide this care and guidance based upon cultural models. They respond to the baby's cries, nourish them, and guide them in learning skills in accordance with implicit cultural goals for child-rearing. In all cultures, parents are typically the primary caregivers for young children. But there is considerable variation in how these caregiving activities are carried out and how they are shared between parents and with other members of the society—older children, extended family, professional caregivers. For example, among the Kung San in South Africa, babies are in constant contact with their mothers and feed frequently. Conversely, Dutch mothers tend to establish a strict feeding schedule very early in a child's life. And many American parents let their babies sleep in separate rooms. Middle-class American mothers talk with their young children about everyday events, asking questions that they already know the answers to. Economically disadvantaged American Appalachian mothers ask questions of their children that they need the answers to. Language is used to tell stories rather than engage in school-like discourse.

The variation in parental behavior is based upon implicit cultural goals and environmental demands. For example, the constant contact of Kung San infants with their mothers not only protects them from the various threats in their environment but also prepares them for close, interdependent relationships necessary in a small social group that share limited resources. Reflecting different cultural goals, parenting practices that encourage sleeping in separate rooms and didactic conversation among middle-class American **families** prepare children for independence and success in school (LeVine, 1988).

Although based primarily in culture, parenting style and capacity are also related to specific familial and societal forces. Socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, substance abuse, migration and immigration, war, disability, and other factors influence how parents care for their children. Two parents may share the parenting role, or fathers may take primary caregiving roles for children's care. Extended family involvement may be constant and expected or parents may be entirely disconnected from relatives.

There is no singular script or prescription for how to be a good parent. Children born with various characteristics, economic and social factors, and changing cultural values as well as individual parental dispositions all conspire against singular guidance about childrearing. Parents, whether in traditional societies or postindustrial societies, have always looked to others for guidance. In traditional societies such sources included extended family and community leaders. Increasingly they look to other sources—media (television and magazines), the books of experts, pediatricians, and early childhood educators (Small, 1998).

Parent Involvement

Early childhood educators require children and their parents to adapt to the policies and practices of their programs, but when early childhood educators work with a child, they are also joining a system of care around that child. Urie **Bronfenbrenner** (1979, 1986) maintained that it is in the best interest of the child for the various people—parents and others who care for children—to do so consistently. The child grows and learns best when these caregivers communicate with each other and share similar child-rearing patterns and goals. The focus of this partnership is the well-being of the child, but often there are disagreements between parents and other caregivers. Differing implicit and culturally based beliefs about child-rearing and the meaning of children's behavior are both natural and inevitable. This may require substantive communication and negotiation. Furthermore, parents may have ambivalent feelings about leaving children in the care of others for a variety of reasons, including the need to maintain an adequate income. Exchanges between parents and others who care for their children may be charged with deep emotions.

The role of early childhood educators is to protect, care for, and support the cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development of young children. To do this well, they must work in alliance with parents. The goal of healthy development of young children is best met when the primary influence on that development is effective. As the primary source for that development is the child's parents, the early childhood educator's role must include supporting the competence and well-being of parents (Shpancer, 2000). Many early childhood programs, such as **Head Start** and **Early Head Start**, have **parenting education** as a central program component. Close relationships with parents and other family members is a hallmark of early childhood programs in Italy (New and Mallory, 2005).

Contemporary theories of child development as well as recent research supports the premise that forming and sustaining effective and authentic partnerships with parents is the foundation of high quality early childhood education (Turnbull,

Turbiville, and Turnbull, 2000). Practices that support such partnerships may include the following:

- transition into the program that allows for forming strong relationships between parents, teachers, and children together;
- regular and ongoing teacher-parent communication about the children's health, behavior, and progress;
- honest, timely, and open communication about developmental or behavioral concerns;
- parental participation in decision making about caregiving practices, curriculum, and overall program policy;
- parental participation in program activities (e.g., volunteering in the classroom, field trips, sharing particular skills);
- opportunities, as appropriate, for teachers to visit children's homes;
- attention to family culture in program planning;
- specific activities that encourage the participation of fathers;
- referral and collaboration with programs that address family support needs such as housing, substance abuse counseling, and health care; and
- parent meetings and support groups.

Effective teacher-parent alliances have benefits for children and parents as well as for the continual development of early childhood educators. Parents, as the primary force in the development of children, are essential partners with early childhood educators not only because they provide information about their children but also because they bring a rich and complex cultural understanding to the care of children. When teachers learn from parents they deepen their view of childhood and the care of children.

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John Hornstein

Parker, Francis W. (1837–1902)

To the general public, progressive education is often associated with John Dewey and no one else. However, Dewey was neither the first nor the last educator to embrace and develop the principles that define a progressive approach. In fact, Dewey owed much to one of the unsung heroes in the progressive education movement. That hero was Francis W. Parker. Dewey once referred to Parker as “the father of progressive education” (Cremin, 1961).

Parker was a practitioner, not a writer or theorist, which is why he remains relatively unsung. Born in New Hampshire in 1837 and widely traveled in Europe where he studied the latest innovations in education, Parker took over a failing Quincy, Massachusetts school system in 1873. As superintendent of the Quincy schools, Parker led a reform to place children’s observing, describing, and understanding at the center of the curriculum. Everything was aimed at making learning meaningful for children and at making school a community with a warm and friendly, even home-like atmosphere.

The results were immediate and positive. The Quincy children thrived in Parkers’ schools, and soon educators were referring to “the Quincy system.” Parker, himself, downplayed his innovations calling them simply a matter of common sense.

Parker went on to become principal of the Cook County Normal School of Chicago. At the Normal school, he developed his approach further and even gave lectures and produced essays on his approach. However, his lectures and writings were few and did not have a lasting effect. The main and lasting effect came when two parents enrolled their children in the practice school.

In 1894 and 1895, Professor and Mrs. John Dewey had a thorough look at Parker’s school as their two children thrived in the school’s younger grades. Then, in 1896, they established their own “Laboratory School,” with Parker and his school clearly in mind. It is, then, not too much to say that Dewey’s writings on education, though rooted in his training as a philosopher, were equally rooted in Francis Parker’s progressive approach and his school.

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W. George Scarlett

Parten, Mildred (1902–)

Mildred Parten received a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Minnesota in 1929. Best known for her work related to children’s play, her landmark study, which was based on her doctoral dissertation, was published in 1932. In this work, Parten describes categories of children’s social play, defined as occurring when children play in groups. Consistent with new understandings emerging from the **Child Study movement**, she identified an age-related progression in the types of social play that characterized early childhood.

Parten identified six categories of play that ranged, in her view, from the least to the most developmentally complex. The first category of social play she labeled

as *unoccupied behavior* and is actually not play, but an observation of others' play. A child participating in unoccupied behavior will generally be seen moving about the classroom from one area to another, but not getting involved in any particular activity. He may be seen standing around, following the teacher, or sitting in one spot glancing around the room.

The second category of social play Parten identified, in which the child is an *onlooker*, is closely related to unoccupied behavior. As an onlooker, the child observes a group of children playing, but does not overtly enter into the play activity with them. He may talk to the children whom he is observing, ask questions, or give suggestions and stays within speaking distance of the group playing so that he can see and hear the play that is taking place.

Parten identified a third category of social play as *solitary play* or playing alone. A child participating in solitary play will play by herself and independently from other children with toys that are different from those being used around her. The child pursues her own play without reference to the activities of others.

The fourth category, which is closely related to solitary play, is identified as *parallel play*. While participating in parallel play, the child continues to play independently, but the activity she chooses brings her within close proximity of other children. She plays with toys that are similar, perhaps using them in similar ways, but does not interact in the play themes of the children nearby. In other words, she plays beside the other children, but not with the other children.

The fifth category, *associative play*, is the first in which the child plays with other children. When participating in associative play, the child interacts and shares materials with other children, but does not engage in a common activity with those around him.

The final category, identified as *cooperative play*, is the most social form of play and involves children playing together in a shared activity. The group is organized with a goal, such as creating a product, playing games, or participating in a dramatic play scenario. Various group members fulfill different roles and those roles complement each other and allow the play to continue in an organized and methodical manner.

Parten's research suggested that, as children grow and mature, they tend to progress through these categories, and their play becomes more complex with age. She noted, further, that earlier types of social play do not disappear entirely and may be revisited occasionally, even as the child becomes capable of more complex levels of social play. Although more recent perspectives on children's play challenge this linear progression—noting, for example, that solitary play may entail high levels of creativity and critical thinking—few early childhood professionals or researchers discuss or study children's play without recognition of the insights provided by Mildred Parten.

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Pavlov, Ivan Petrovich (1849–1936)

Ivan Pavlov, a Nobel Prize-winning Russian scientist, discovered, while studying the digestive processes of dogs, that reflexive behavior can be controlled, or “conditioned,” by external events. Pavlov showed how a previously neutral stimulus (the sound of a metronome) could elicit an involuntary response (salivation) if it was repeatedly paired with a stimulus that produced the reflex naturally (food). Pavlov termed this phenomenon *classical conditioning*. A brilliant methodologist, Pavlov’s research laid the groundwork for American academics, most notably Edward Thorndike, John B. Watson, and B.F. Skinner, to formulate and establish a purely objective science of learning, known as *behaviorism*.

Pavlov, the first child of a poor family, was born on September 14, 1849, at Ryazan in central Russia. Peter Dmitrievich Pavlov, his father and also the village priest, urged young Ivan toward theology, but Pavlov’s love of natural science led him instead to the lifelong study of physiology. Pavlov’s education began in the church schools of Ryazan but continued until he obtained an advanced degree and a fellowship award from the Academy of Medical Surgery. His early research, carried out at the clinic of S.P. Botkin, focused on the nervous system. In 1890, Pavlov became the director of the Department of Physiology at the Institute of Experimental Medicine in St. Petersburg. Here he remained for 45 years, building the Institute into an influential center of physiological research.

Conditioned Reflexes (1927), which was published in English, established Pavlov’s reputation in the West and won widespread acclaim. The recognition that accompanied winning the Nobel Prize in 1904 may have protected Pavlov from persecution during and after the Russian Revolution. A government decree signed by Lenin in 1921 recognized Pavlov’s service to the working class; the Communist Party and the Soviet government provided well for Pavlov and his collaborators. The Soviet Union established itself as an international center for the study of physiology by 1935, a position secured in part because of Ivan Pavlov’s contributions. Pavlov remained actively involved in research until his death at age 87.

Pavlov is sometimes credited with starting the behavioristic revolution in psychology, which saw an abrupt shift toward studying only what was directly observable. An American psychologist, John B. Watson, is more appropriately recognized as the founder of radical behaviorism. Watson applied Pavlov’s methods to the study of children, successfully demonstrating that fear could be learned and then extinguished in a child by classical conditioning. Watson advanced a theoretical position that weighted environment much more heavily than heredity in the nature-nurture debate—a point of view related to social improvement. It was perhaps inevitable that Watson would soon be criticizing the nation’s mothers for failing to provide healthy conditions for their children’s growth.

Educators too felt the impact of behaviorism. At Teachers College in New York City, colleagues Edward Thorndike and Patty Smith Hill emphasized the importance of habit formation during the early years. Experimentation with children now involved stimulus-response psychology—educators sought to define desirable behavior and condition children to produce it.

In more recent times, B.F. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning described how reinforcement can be used to modify behavior, a principle that soon infiltrated early childhood education. Using praise, token systems, or behavioral charts with the intention of altering children's behavior are all practices that derive from reinforcement theory.

Behavioristic practices are firmly established in many American schools, particularly in special education. Whether these contemporary applications should be associated with the work of Ivan Pavlov, however, is open to debate.

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Ann C. Benjamin

PCER. See *Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research Program*

Peabody, Elizabeth Palmer (1804–1894)

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody was an American Transcendentalist, member of the Common School Movement, lecturer in the Concord School of Philosophy, and the leader of the campaign to establish kindergartens during the nineteenth century. Peabody opened the first English-speaking kindergarten in the United States in Boston in 1860. Her 1863 *Guide to the Kindergarten and Moral Culture of Infancy*, coauthored with her sister, Mary Tyler Peabody Mann, was widely considered the most authoritative work on the theory and practice of the kindergarten during the 1860s and 1870s.

The eldest of six children, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody was born in Billerica, Massachusetts, in 1804 and grew up in Salem, Massachusetts. Her father, Dr. Nathaniel Peabody, was a teacher at Philips Andover Academy, who later studied medicine and dentistry at Harvard. Her mother, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, was the headmistress of a girl's boarding school. Elizabeth received her education at her mother's school and proved to be an exceptionally gifted student. At the age of sixteen, she became her mother's assistant, went on to teach in Maine and Massachusetts, and later studied Greek with Ralph Waldo Emerson and history and philosophy with William Ellery Channing.

In 1825, Peabody and her sister Mary founded the Beacon Hill School in Boston, where they developed a curriculum designed to capture the child's imagination through the study of literature, the arts, dramatic play, and creative writing. Based on her work at the school, Peabody authored a series of textbooks and guides for teachers in which she advocated an education of loving nurturance, example, and exploration. Bronson Alcott admired the series and asked her to join him at his experimental Temple School in Concord in 1834. Peabody published a favorable description of Alcott's innovations in *Record of a School* in 1835. The following

year, a public controversy erupted over Alcott's classroom discussions of sex and the gospels. Although Peabody defended him, their collaboration ended in 1837.

Peabody returned to Boston and turned her attention to social and educational reform. She opened a bookstore to promote transcendentalist literature and make foreign-language texts (many of which she translated herself) more widely available, hosted literary discussions with radical Margaret Fuller, lent support to abolitionist and suffragist causes, and became editor of the *Dial*. She and Mary Peabody, later the wife of Horace Mann, became active in the Common School Movement. In 1859, Peabody read an article on the educational theory of Friedrich Froebel and the German **Kindergarten** and recognized a striking resemblance to her own philosophy of early childhood education. She immediately began to urge common schoolers to add kindergarten to their reform agenda. In 1860, she and Mary Mann opened a kindergarten in Boston. The publication of their *Guide to the Kindergarten* in 1863 initiated the national Kindergarten Movement. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody became its acknowledged leader.

During the late 1860s, Peabody toured German schools and recruited Froebel's students to work in model kindergartens in Boston, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. She formed a national network of kindergarten teachers, lectured throughout the country, founded and edited the *Kindergarten Messenger*, and served as president of the American Froebel Union. She was appointed to the National Education Association's Kindergarten Committee and in 1876 organized a kindergarten demonstration class for the American Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Although her health began to fail in her later years, Peabody continued to work for the cause of kindergarten well into her eighties. She died in 1894.

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Susan Douglas Franzosa

Pedagogy

Pedagogy is typically defined as the art and science of teaching. The term dates back hundreds of years to the Greek word "pedagogue." Originally, a pedagogue was a servant (often a slave) who attended to a young boy's ancillary educational needs such as carrying books and accompanying him to school (Monroe 1913). The word is now synonymous with "teaching," the art and science of educating others through enacting pedagogy of some form. Pedagogy therefore is not synonymous with the term **curriculum**, or what children should know and be taught. Pedagogy encompasses the psychological, cultural, political, and socioemotional processes of teaching young children.

Teaching young children is a dynamic process that demands not only that a teacher have a fully realized vision of the goals and content present in a curriculum

but also a theoretical understanding of how best to assist students to learn. In addition, he or she must develop and become expert in using a repertoire of strategies to respond effectively to both an individual student's learning and those of subgroups and the class as a whole. In other words, pedagogy is a teacher's tool kit that encompasses his or her professional philosophy about teaching, learning and the purposes of early education, a knowledge base that informs these beliefs, as well as a range of methods for putting these views into action (Katz 1995). This toolkit is developed through professional preparation opportunities as well as teachers' individual experiences of schooling.

At the same time what kinds of tools a teacher chooses to use on any given day is also shaped by the contexts in which they work. For example, a teacher in a **Head Start** program enacts a different kind of pedagogy than a public school teacher because of the differing curriculum goals, training opportunities, standards, and assessment procedures of their sponsoring agency. Teachers' pedagogy is also influenced by whether they work in an urban, suburban, or rural setting and the socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds of the families they serve. Families and administrators hold particular assumptions about what it means to be a teacher, and those assumptions mediate how a teacher operates in the classroom.

Similarly, pedagogy is not limited to the classroom and school context but is also influenced by the evolution of differing ideas that over time change the ways teaching young children is defined and described. For example, the questioning of the research base underpinning the original guidelines for **developmentally appropriate practice** (DAP) (e.g., Mallory and New 1994) as well as wider dissemination of the theories of Lev **Vygotsky** led to a revised set of guidelines that address issues of culture and context (Bredekamp and Copple 1997). In addition, decisions about which research, theories and knowledges are used to inform pedagogy are also the product of politics. In the 1960s, the launching of Sputnik and a concern that students in the United States were not performing well in math and science contributed to a backlash against Dewey's experience-based education and an increased focus on academic skills (Krogh and Slentz 2001).

Thus, early childhood pedagogy is not simply an interpersonal interaction between teacher and students but the outcome of a set of relationships between the individual understandings and biographies of teachers, the contexts in which they act, as well as sociocultural and political forces operating at the macro level of society (Luke 1996). Even when teachers subscribe to a particular form of pedagogy (e.g., constructivist), their moment-to-moment encounters with children are shaped by a number of competing forces. As a consequence, despite the field claiming to have a core set of pedagogical practices (e.g., DAP), there is much diversity in early childhood pedagogy. Some of these pedagogies include child-centered education, play, the use of materials and structuring of the environment to facilitate problem solving and inquiry, democratic pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and direct instruction.

In early childhood, pedagogy is not a widely used term, perhaps because the research base of the field has focused less on teachers and teaching and more on the application of child development knowledge (Genishi, Ryan, Ochsner, and Yarnall 2001). However, early education in the twenty-first century is one

characterized by both increasing standardization and diversity. Sophisticated forms of technology and globalization have led to a diversity of student populations and family structures that has never before been experienced. At the same time the current emphasis across the Western world to harness early education as a means of ensuring ongoing productivity is resulting in increasing standardization. Given these circumstances, it is quite probable that much more attention will need to be given to teachers and pedagogy to learn how to respond effectively to young children in these changed and changing times.

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Sharon Ryan and Amy Hornbeck

Pedagogy, Activity-Based/Experiential

Activity-based, experiential pedagogy asserts that effective learning in early childhood (and sometimes beyond) requires opportunities for children to engage in activities on their own initiative for extended periods of time. The immediate, active interplay with objects and their inherent concepts, or consideration of people's roles and their various relationships to one another, allows children to begin to develop an authentic understanding of how they work. The underlying theories of this form of pedagogy posit that children are not passive recipients of knowledge transmitted from their environment, but active participants in their own development as they interpret, construct, and transform their experiences, taking learning into their own hands both literally and figuratively. Many current educational philosophies in the United States and Europe make use of these theories in their rationale for child-directed, play-based experiences at school, including the approaches of Maria Montessori (1962), Waldorf (Oldfield, 2001), Reggio Emilia, the Creative Curriculum, High/Scope, and Koplowsky's therapeutic curriculum (1996).

The roots of activity-based, experiential pedagogy go back to the early 1800s, when German educator Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) created the first **kinder-garten** program, a carefully planned and monitored environment where young children could freely use thoughtfully selected materials that Froebel called gifts.

These gifts, also known as occupations, included geometric shapes made of wood and metal, yarn and cloth, paper, pencils, and scissors. Froebel believed that **play** is the heart of the learning process, utilizing children's "channeling of spontaneous energies into orderly behavior" (Gutek, 1991). He conceived of the classroom as a place to experience happiness and fulfillment at an early age and to develop a sense of self, benefiting both the individual and society as the child grew toward adulthood.

Soon after Froebel, the new field of psychology provided a plethora of theories supporting activity-based, experiential learning, including the work of Sigmund **Freud**, Erik **Erikson**, Jean **Piaget**, and Lev **Vygotsky**. Central to their concepts of ego development (Freud), identity formation (Erikson), equilibration (Piaget), and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky) is the premise that children are active agents in their own individual development.

In the United States, John **Dewey** (1859–1952) articulated a philosophy of experience-based learning as a dialectic between students and mentors. He believed that learning began when a student encountered experiences where there was doubt, uncertainty, and questioning. Dewey considered the human mind, from the youngest age onward, to have the capacity for seeking answers through self-initiated, trial-and-error inquiry, facilitated by a teacher or mentor figure. He implemented his educational philosophy in developing the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago.

American psychologist and educator Jerome **Bruner** (born 1915) extended Dewey's ideas to their more contemporary expression—namely, the role of play in early education. Bruner describes play as an approach to action, rather than as a particular form of activity. The important characteristic of the mental approach to experiences during play is its nonliteral, not-for-real premise. In play with objects and during pretending, children engage in hypothetical thinking: "What if I be the auntie and you be the policeman and my dog is sick . . ." Children work through ideas to their logical conclusions and then rewrite the script, switching roles and trying out different possibilities. Play is critical to development, Bruner argues, because through it children refine their skills in symbolic thinking and in using symbols, particularly language, as they establish a sense of meaningful connection to the ideas and experiences around them (1977).

American early childhood educator Vivian Paley has provided some of the richest descriptions in the professional literature of young children's learning through **play as storytelling**. Her many books (c.f., 1981) describe the implementation of play-based experiential learning in contemporary early childhood classrooms. Paley's work expands our understanding of experience-based activity as pedagogy and, in particular, the teacher's role. As Paley has grown in her understanding of children's play, she has revised her understanding of the teacher's role in relation to children's learning:

There was a time when I believed it was my task to show the children how to solve their problems. I wrote: I do not ask you to stop thinking about play. Our contract [between teacher and children] read more like this: If you will keep trying to explain yourselves, I will keep showing you how to think about the problems you need to solve.

After a few years, the contract needed to be rewritten: Let me study your play and figure out how play helps you solve your problems. Play contains your questions, and I must know what questions you are asking before mine will be useful.

Even this is not accurate enough. Today I would add: Put your play into formal narratives, and I will help you and your classmates listen to one another. In this way, you will build a literature of images and themes, of beginnings and endings, of references and allusions. You must invent your own literature if you are to connect your ideas to the ideas of others. (1990, p. 18)

Paley explores how child-initiated activities in the classroom are opportunities for learning not just because children interact with objects and people, but because there is a teacher present who can prepare the environment for such learning, observe, and at times interact with children during their activities. For experiential activity to be a form of pedagogy, a teacher is necessary: a teacher who is conscious of what can be gained from the experiences and can guide children toward those benefits (McNamee, 2005).

American educator Judith Lindfors delineates some of the early childhood teacher's roles as *providing*, *learning*, *observing*, and *responding* (1987). Her description of these roles provides a blueprint for implementing activity-based, experiential learning. As provider, the teacher ensures that there is space, materials, and time for children to engage in self-initiated activities. The teacher also provides a safe environment for children's experimentation and exploration, including psychological support through acknowledgment of their choices. She provides questions and suggestions to spur, challenge, and extend their thinking about the objects, ideas, or people they are considering.

Lindfors' "teacher as learner" (as opposed to "teacher as knower") emphasizes the importance of uncovering children's own interests and questions and following their thought processes. Listening is an essential skill to fulfill this role. As a learner, the teacher is continually challenged to rethink and refine her pedagogical approach.

Listening is closely related to observing—both yield rich insights about children's paths of inquiry. When teachers observe, they seek to "read children's behavior" (Lindfors 1987, p. 302) and find meaning in their actions and comments. The teacher as observer is viewing and interpreting the learning situation from the child's point of view. Having observed, she is in a stronger position to assume the role of responder.

Responding often begins with a statement reflecting back to the children what the teacher is seeing—details about their choice of activity, their arrangement and use of materials, their affect while working. Teachers look for openings to ask questions, to find out if the child wants to think out loud or wants help with some aspect of the activity. It is a delicate balance between responding and intruding, but the boundaries are usually discussed and negotiated on an ongoing basis as part of the discourse patterns in classrooms where children customarily take initiative for learning. Responding as a teacher also includes commenting on children's efforts in a way that provides emotional and intellectual validation for what they are trying to achieve and expands the possibilities inherent in their activity. Lindfors writes, "Now the response is to help, now to meet the child's

idea with a new idea, now to suggest, now to encourage, now to partner—always sensitive to the particular child at the particular moment” (1987, p. 306).

Activity-based, experiential learning does not mean that children can do anything they choose at any time. Likewise, for the teacher to carry out the role of pedagogical leader in this approach requires discipline and training. Lindfors argues that the role mirrors what family and community members do, intuitively and unconsciously, in the language-learning process outside of schools. The principles of adult guidance in out-of-school environments are similar to the role of the teacher in the experience-based classroom, where the knowing, judging teacher is replaced by the listening, learning teacher (1987).

American psychologist Barbara Rogoff looks at experiential learning beyond the classroom (2003). Focusing primarily on non-Western cultures, where teaching and learning are often embedded in activities in which younger members of the family and community participate alongside more mature and experienced members, she highlights the social and cultural dynamics that shape learning in and out of school. These dynamics usually involve fluctuating relationships of control, active work, talk, and experimenting as tasks get done, and learning likewise—learning that is both intentional as well as a by-product of the apprenticeships children have with elders in their families, communities and schools. Like Rogoff, American psychologist Michael Cole takes a sociocultural approach to the study of human development and education (1999) in a wide range of school and community settings. The work of Rogoff, Cole and their colleagues is helping to illuminate the broader principles of activity-based, experiential pedagogy that cross school, home, and community environments and provide the foundation for optimizing learning in each of these settings.

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Gillian D. McNamee

Pedagogy, Child-Centered

A child-centered pedagogy places learners in the foreground of the educative process. It is their purposes, interests, and needs that guide curriculum

formation. The belief that the most appropriate education for young children should be child-centered has its roots in the progressive education movement that emerged in the late eighteenth century. Influenced by the naturalistic ideas of Jean-Jacques **Rousseau**, Johann **Pestalozzi**, and Friedrich **Froebel** that opposed traditional school approaches and reflecting wider social currents that embraced the ideal of progress through science and reason, progressive educators believed that “a natural educational methodology could free man by advancing him along the path to a better world” (Gutek, 1972, p. 386). At the turn of the 20th century, American progressive educators began a quest to change the school curriculum from a focus on the intellect trained through recitation and teacher direction, to one that emphasized beginning with the child and encouraging development of problem solving and social skills through direct experience with the environment. By educating for understanding and cooperation, progressive educators claimed that the next generation would have the intellectual tools to create and maintain a democratic, free, and open society. The progressive zeal for education as the means for improving society impacted all arenas of education, including the world of the young child in **kindergarten**.

It was the rigid interpretation of the Froebelian curriculum implemented in kindergartens across the United States that came under the attack of the progressives in early education. Seeking to replace intuitive and philosophical ways of knowing about young children, the progressives advocated for a scientific knowledge base and practices built on psychological principles (Silin, 1987). During this period of ferment, the child study movement emerged as a unique field of inquiry. Employing questionnaires and scientific observation of children’s behavior, G. Stanley **Hall** argued for the direct study of the child in naturalistic settings as the basis for educational decision making. Around the same time, John **Dewey** proposed a science of education based on a pragmatic philosophy of experience. Children’s interests and purposes were to be used to develop educational experiences that engaged students in problem solving and learning the skills for participating in a democracy. While both of these theoretical approaches suggested that kindergarten curriculum begins with the child, others like Edward Lee **Thorndike** argued for kindergarten teachers to “stimulate the formation of acceptable habits in children and to inhibit inappropriate ones” (Weber, 1969, p. 54).

Over the first three decades of the 20th century, progressive kindergarten educators experimented with the challenge of replacing the inflexible sequence of the Froebelian gifts (manipulative activities) and occupations (handwork projects) as the organizers of the curriculum with other experiences and materials that were based on these new educational theories. Although diversity abounded both in the theoretical rationales and the practices labeled progressive, Weber (1969) argues that by 1925, most reconstructed kindergarten programs were characterized by similar features: (a) using children’s play as the natural medium for learning, (b) basing curriculum on knowledge of young children’s development and interests, (c) a concern for proper health, (d) a work-play period, and (e) similar materials such as blocks, dolls, etc.

Although the progressive movement lost its dominant hold on the kindergarten curriculum during the ensuing decades, its child-centered approaches have

continued through the field's increasing use of child development knowledge as the primary source for decisions regarding methods and programs (Silin, 1987). The theories and research drawn from developmental psychology have generated different approaches to the practice of child-centered education (e.g., the **Bank Street Approach**, **Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)**, **High/Scope Curriculum**, the **Project Approach**) but all of these versions are united by similar themes.

The first of these themes is autonomy. Children are viewed as individuals with their own desires, interests, and needs who require freedom from adult authority to explore ideas independently (Burman, 1994). Tied to developing children's autonomy, therefore, is the opportunity for student choice in the curriculum. Children are assumed to know when they are ready to learn and to be able to make appropriate choices about their learning. Through exercising their freedom to choose, children develop independence, self-control, and responsibility. Third is the validation of children's natural need to play as pedagogy. Play is intrinsically tied to children's interests; therefore, child-centered educators argue that play fosters persistence and competence because children find learning meaningful (Burman, 1994). Fourth, rather than compartmentalizing knowledge, in a child-centered pedagogy, knowledge is integrated. Children learn through experience in the physical and social worlds with teachers assisting them to connect ideas encountered during play to broader disciplines and frameworks of ideas. Thus, the final theme is the construct of the teacher as a facilitator and supporter of children's learning. Rather than instructing children, teachers structure the environment, selecting activities and offering suggestions or questions that will allow children to continue to explore and build on their learning (Burman, 1994). In contrast to the oppressive practices of transmission educational approaches, advocates for a child-centered education argue that the emphasis on personal choice and freedom from adult authority in a developmentally appropriate curriculum responds to individual differences and ensures educational success for all.

Despite the widespread endorsement of child-centered pedagogy in the field, political and intellectual forces have begun to disrupt what is meant by this term. Using critical theories to deconstruct the values and methods of developmental psychology, and developmentally appropriate practice, some scholars question whether teachers can enact individually and culturally appropriate practices when most of the studies underpinning accepted views of children's development have been conducted with homogenous populations (white, middle-class) (New 1994). For these scholars, child-centered pedagogy cannot be grounded by child development knowledge alone, but must be informed by a range of knowledges that enable teachers to respond to diversity and the ways in which childhood is changing (Ryan and Grieshaber 2004). Paradoxically, at the same time as this debate is taking place, there is also increasing standardization of the early childhood curriculum as evidenced by the imposition of academic standards for preschool (Roskos and Neuman. 2005), the increasing expectation that teachers use empirically validated curriculum models, and the implementation of a national curriculum in some countries (e.g., Great Britain). Therefore, similar to the ferment that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, the aims and methods of child-centered pedagogy are once again being contested. How child-centered

pedagogies are re-envisioned for the twenty-first century remains unclear. What is clear, however, is that because of globalization, to be child-centered will require teachers to respond to ever-increasingly diverse student populations, changing family structures, and an expansion in the kinds of knowledge and experiences children bring with them to early childhood programs.

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Sharon Ryan

Pedagogy, Play-Based

Play has been the cornerstone of high quality early childhood pedagogy in Western society since the early days of the field almost two hundred years ago (Klugman and Smilansky, 1990). All of the major theorists, from Friedrich **Froebel** to Jean **Piaget**, locate play as the primary developmental task of preschoolers. However, while almost everyone places play at the center of their curriculum, there has never been consensus about what play is or why it is a valuable activity for young children. Depending on what theory you subscribe to, play can be organized as a highly structured activity that is primarily designed to teach particular skills, or as a completely exploratory activity free from any adult interference. Current understandings of play are reflected in several examples of a play-based early childhood pedagogy that puts this theory into practice.

In the last several decades the work of the Russian psychologist Lev **Vygotsky** has emerged as one of the most influential theories in the creation of educational programs for young children. Vygotsky's work on **culture**, learning, and development has had a major impact on what is considered **developmentally appropriate practice** and has helped shape many of the more recent **curriculum** and programs for young children. However, while his name has become well known, there has been only limited attention paid to Vygotsky's ideas about play and this limited focus has affected our ability to make full use of Vygotsky's work to develop pedagogies that are creative, developmental and true to the improvisational nature of children's play.

For Vygotsky (1978), play is not just an outward expression of a child's developmental level; it is an activity that leads development. Play allows children to

function on the outer edge of their zone of proximal development, to be ahead of where they are. Vygotsky believed that development does not happen inside the child, but that it comes into existence socially. He created the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to give expression to the relationship between what the child can do independently and what the child can do in collaboration with others (Newman and Holzman, 1993). Vygotsky argued that if we only focus on what the child can do independently then we only see what has already developed and we miss what is developing. He pointed out that children are able to do many more things within a supportive social context than they can do alone.

Over the years there have been many interpretations of the ZPD. Some psychologists and educators have focused on the instrumental value of the ZPD as a teaching technique for helping an individual child do what is a little beyond her or his independent skill level by being supported by an adult or a more skilled peer. However, another way to understand the ZPD is as a creative, improvisational activity. The ZPD is the activity of people creating environments where children (and adults) can take risks, make mistakes, and support each other to do what they do not yet know how to do. It is by participating in creating environments where learning can occur that children learn (Newman and Holzman, 1993; Wink, 2001).

Vygotsky talked about the creation of zones of proximal development in many different situations—babies learning to speak, the instructional environment of formal schooling, and, for the purposes of this article, in the play activities of preschool-age children. According to Vygotsky in the following excerpt, it is in play that children are able to do what they do not yet know how to do:

play creates a zone of proximal development for the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102)

What makes play a ZPD? Why are children able to perform “a head taller than” themselves when they play? Vygotsky took pains to point out that a distinguishing feature of all play is that it involves the creation of an imaginary situation. Whether it is a game of chess or baseball or an imaginary play scenario about being Princesses fighting a dragon, all play involves creating, and working within, an imaginary situation.

In addition, Vygotsky also pointed out that all play has rules. This may not be immediately apparent when we picture the seemingly chaotic play of preschool-age children, but Vygotsky was talking about a particular kind of rules—rules that are in the service of, and help to create, the imaginary situation. For Vygotsky, it is the relationship between the imaginary situation and the rules that are created that makes the play of young children a ZPD.

This is not an easy concept to grasp, so let's take for example a group of four-year olds playing at being princesses. This is clearly an imaginary situation—no one is really a princess—but what kind of rules are there? They are not the same as the rules of chess or Monopoly where the rules have been established by other people long before the game starts. When playing at being princesses the children

have to create the rules for the play as they go along. While they may be influenced by what they have seen of princesses on TV or in fairy tales, the children have to figure out how they are going to play at being princesses together at the same time that they are playing at being princesses. Among other things they have to decide who is going to be a Princess, what other characters there will be, how the characters will behave, what their relationships are going to be like, how long they are going to play, etc. But they don't do this before they play at being princesses, they create these rules in the process of creating the princesses play. The rules are inseparable from the playing of the game—determining these things is what brings the play situation into existence. In this situation the rules are both the tool for creating the imaginary situation and they are the imaginary situation itself.

From this perspective, the play of young children is a zone of proximal development because it is in playing that children are most actively involved in creating the activity. In play children do not conform or adapt to a preexistent reality, they create an imaginary situation and the rules for performing in that imaginary situation at the same time (Newman and Holzman, 1993). The children, as both the creator and the follower of the rules, can perform in ways that are in advance of what they can do in other situations (Vygotsky, 1978). Many educators and psychologists have pointed out that it is this feature of play—the fact that the players themselves create it—that makes play such a great way for children to learn and develop.

Examples of Playful Pedagogies

The remainder of this entry is devoted to two examples of early childhood pedagogy that I believe exemplify this Vygotskian understanding of play and the zone of proximal development.

Playworlds. The Playworlds project was first created in Finland by Gunilla Lundqvist (1995) and has been further developed by Pentti Haikkarainen (2004). Playworlds has taken place in preschools and elementary schools in Japan, Finland, and the United States. In the Playworlds project (Baumer, Ferholt and Lecusay, 2005; Rainio, 2005), children and adults cocreate an imaginary world using children's literature, fables and folk tales as the starting point. Each day for an extended period of time the classroom (or part of the classroom) is transformed into a fictional world where the adults take on the roles of the characters in the book and the children help shape the performances as both characters and commentators. Through this collaboration children are supported to continue being creative even as they make the transition from free play to organized school activities.

The idea is that in playworlds two seemingly different worlds, of play and school, of children and adults meet in an institutional context and develop a new form of improvised and dramatized learning activity. (Rainio, 2005)

Improvisational Play Intervention

Barbara O'Neill (2004) is an early childhood special education teacher who works as a SEIT (Special Education Itinerant Teacher) in New York City. Her job is to work in general education preschools with children who have been diagnosed as having a learning or developmental disability. She has developed an approach to play intervention that is based on the similarities between the fantasy play of young children and the performance art of improv comedians. In both activities the participants create unscripted scenes or stories using their collective imaginations.

Most of the children that O'Neill works with have trouble participating in fantasy play with other children. Traditional play intervention programs address this "deficit" by teaching the children isolated play skills, coaching them through interactions with other children or teaching the typically developing children how to play with special needs children. O'Neill has developed an approach where she teaches mixed groupings of children the games and activities that adult improv comedians play—she creates a preschool improv ensemble with both special needs and typically developing children.

In improv anything any performer says or does is considered an offer and the job of the improv troupe is to make use of all offers by using them to create the scene. As O'Neill (2004) says, "This includes the good, the bad, the weird and the interesting. (p. 5)" In the improv play groups O'Neill and the children make use of all the offers the children make—even something as simple as a head shake, a hand gesture, or a single inaudible word are usable in the improv games. While O'Neill may have to be the one to make use of these offers in the beginning, over time the ensemble develops in their ability to include everyone. As the ensemble develops, the children learn that they are players, and from a Vygotskian perspective, they are able to perform ahead of where they are.

I think the biggest thing that I want children to have is to start to see themselves as performers and creators. These are children who at the age of 4 already have lowered expectations for who they will become. So I really want to help the kids I work with to understand that they constantly have different choices they can make and don't have to react the way they are supposed to react, the way they usually react. (O'Neill, 2005)

Conclusion

In both the Playworlds and the Improvisational Play Interventions children and adults create imaginary situations together and in doing so the children are able to stretch and do things they would not otherwise be able to do. They are just two examples of the infinite ways play can be a central part of developmentally appropriate and innovative pedagogy for young children.

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Carrie Lobman

Pedagogy, Social Justice/Equity

Social justice/equity pedagogy is a multifaceted approach to teaching and learning that seeks to identify, resist, and transform various forms of oppression (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) in schools and society. Social justice/equity pedagogy is based on two premises about the relationship between schools and society. First, schools have both a social responsibility and obligation to produce citizens who are able to participate meaningfully and substantively within an ever-changing, technological, multicultural and global democracy. Second, what occurs daily in classrooms between teachers and students both *shapes* and *is shaped* by social, cultural, historical, and current political contexts. As such, social justice/equity pedagogy serves as an education reform effort that is rooted in the everyday classroom interactions between students, teachers, parents, and administrators. The ultimate and additional goal of social justice/equity pedagogy is to ignite social reform and change within other institutions throughout society. Within this framework, the purpose of teaching and education is more than achieving traditional academic and social outcomes. Rather, the ultimate purpose of teaching (and education) is to identify and scrutinize current inequitable practices within schools and society while simultaneously creating socially just, democratic, and liberatory alternatives for tomorrow's society. Furthermore, educators pursuant of this approach labor to employ a pedagogical praxis that is as follows:

- **Critical/reflective:** Students are encouraged and taught to closely interrogate all knowledge for various forms of bias. Students learn to ask critical questions such as, "Who benefits and who suffers?" "Was that fair or unfair?" "Whose knowledge is this?" "What perspective(s) is/are missing?" Social justice/equity educators approach and present no information or knowledge as objective, value-free, and uncontested truth. In contrast, teachers acknowledge that all knowledge presented in school contexts is subjective and engage students in activities that encourage them to critically analyze and problematize the curriculum. In addition, to help

students develop an understanding that no particular form of knowledge is more significant than any other form or source of knowledge, teachers encourage and include critiques of real-life events, situations, movies, structures, among others. Through these processes of critical analysis and reflection, students ultimately develop a sense of critical consciousness needed to identify and combat oppression within their localized school contexts and the larger society. Young children are especially eager to discuss their interpretations of what is fair.

- **Culturally Relevant and Responsive:** Social justice/equity teachers do not see student's native/home culture as an impediment to school success as was traditionally the case with the most deficit-oriented models of school reform; instead, they use students' home culture as an important and useful tool in helping students develop and acquire school knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Teachers construct lessons in ways that learning will be meaningful and relevant to cultural and lived experiences of the students involved. In this process, students are not required to shed their home or native cultures while working to acquire the school culture. Instead, socially just/equitable educators work to maintain and build upon students' home/native cultures while aiding students in acquiring the skills, dispositions, language, and knowledge base necessary to be successful in school settings and beyond. Teachers frame curriculum and teaching around issues that are naturally important to the students' everyday needs and interests. In this sense, teachers create a **curriculum** that is tentative and ever-emergent based on what interests, questions, and or challenges students are involved in from moment to moment. It is important to note that this does not mean that socially just/equitable teachers don't adhere to specific and rigorous standards in their teaching. What this does mean is that, compared to other pedagogical strategies frequently used in settings with a significant population of students of color (e.g., direct instruction, teaching to the test), students' interests and needs are used as the basis by which curricula content is taught. Finally, a core theme in culturally relevant and responsive teaching is the notion of education as a project of social activism and social justice. Teachers not only encourage students to 'trouble' oppressive structures in society, but they also make spaces for them to work toward developing solutions to these problems. The teacher's role, within this tenet, is to provide support, encouragement, insight, and resources for children to take social action toward resisting and eradicating many of these troubling structures. Moreover, teachers work to help students connect with their current acts toward social change and historical legacies of social justice. In early childhood setting with young children, this sort of endeavor resonates with principles of an antibias multicultural curriculum.
- **Multicultural and Antioppressive:** In an attempt to address the changing demographics in public schools, socially just teachers use action-oriented measures in identifying, combating, and deconstructing injustice within localized learning contexts. First, teachers labor to identify, resist, and transform deep-seated and overarching oppressive pedagogical structures (i.e., tracking, ability grouping, etc.) within their immediate classroom and school contexts. Next, teachers work to transform the curriculum to become more inclusive and respectful of the histories, knowledges, and ways of seeing and knowing that their students bring to school. Lastly, teachers work to incorporate multiple and culture/race-specific pedagogical strategies for teaching and assessment. In this sense, teachers work to construct pedagogical

practices that are both equitable (fair in terms of the needs of the individual student) and equal (fair in terms of what is accessible/available to all students).

- **Active/participatory:** Socially just/equitable teachers believe that learning is a social process that requires active participation and engagement in learning activities. Therefore, as contrasted with more traditional and passive models of teaching and learning, where students are perceived as empty receptacles awaiting deposits of knowledge from teachers, social justice/equity pedagogy encourages teachers to create learning opportunities in which students can actively construct/create their own meanings. In this sense, learning is a matter of doing or being and not simply recitation or memorization. Therefore, teachers frequently use teaching strategies, for example, role playing, mock trials, and voting—a strategy that young children can learn to understand and utilize in their own democratic decision making.
- **Democratic:** Socially just/equitable educators work to create classroom environments that are democratic in nature. That is, at its core, teachers work to create classroom settings where students are encouraged to challenge, question, and solve problems collectively and collaboratively. Students are urged to think about and make decisions in terms of “what is best” for the majority or group and the individual students within the class. Social justice/equity educators believe that democracy is a concept that students must experience in order to understand it. They frequently utilize pedagogical strategies like inquiry and experimentation to convey themes and concepts related to social justice/equity. The social studies curriculum for young children emphasizes similar goals.
- **Caring/Loving/Passionate:** Social justice/equity teachers work to create classroom and learning environments in which students feel cared about and in which care for others in the classroom and the world is promoted.
- **Academic Achievement:** Social justice/equity pedagogy not only strives to aid students in making social changes in tomorrow’s society, but it also works to teach students how to be successful within the current society. Through its use of critical and activist curriculum and teaching experiences, social justice/equity pedagogy aims to inspire higher levels of academic performance than more traditional forms of teaching and assessment. The basic premise is that when students write, discuss, reflect, and think about “real” ideas, content, and issues, they are more likely to exhibit higher levels of engagement, motivation, investment, and ultimately achievement than when students are disengaged and disconnected from the content being taught. *See also* Curriculum, Emergent; Curriculum, Social Studies; Multicultural and Antibias Education.

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Peer Culture

The concept of “peer culture” has been researched and elaborated over the past two decades by Sociologist William Corsaro and his students, and by colleagues who have been inspired by him. In his original work, Corsaro (1985) immersed himself in a preschool classroom for a contextualized, situated, and extended look at the life world of three- and four-year-olds as they play and interact with each other—on their own terms, for their own purposes, and with their own rhythms. What resulted from this long-term fieldwork was a landmark theoretical contribution, a description of children’s group life as peer culture. Corsaro defines peer culture as “a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values or concerns that kids produce and share in interaction with each other” (2003, p. 37). Corsaro takes an interpretive view of culture as public, collective, and performative, in contrast to traditional work that defines culture as internalized, shared values and norms guiding behavior and affecting individual development, which are transmitted across generations. In introducing this interpretive cultural lens to the study of childhood, Corsaro extends and reinterprets the meanings of children’s group life, friendships, and peer involvements, previously the topics of such classic work as Opie and Opie’s (1959) study of the game play of British children and Konner’s (1981) study of infant behavior and juveniles among the Kung San.

Corsaro’s contributions have helped us gain a fuller understanding of the meanings and nature of children’s play, of the social dynamics (which they must negotiate), and of the complex accomplishment of group life. Taking a cross-cultural, comparative perspective in early educational settings in the United States and Italy, Corsaro’s research reveals much about children’s affiliation with each other as a process of social construction and face-to-face negotiation; the production and sharing of local peer cultures in American and Italian contexts; the relationships between children’s peer culture constructions and their conceptions of and reactions to adult rules and constraints; children’s rejection and exclusion of others as they protect fragile “interactive space” and; children’s appropriation of wider popular cultures resources (e.g., myths, folklore, television and movies, literature) into peer culture themes and texts. Taken in total, Corsaro’s contribution has been the construction of a theory of childhood socialization as a process of interpretive reproduction, rather than a process of social transmission.

Building on Corsaro’s peer culture theory, one team of early childhood researchers used a series of linked analyses to examine classroom processes for understanding friendship and peer culture life within the context of becoming a student (summarized in Kantor and Fernie, 2003). Different aspects of these mutually informing analyses were used to demonstrate how the value and meanings of particular artifacts are locally constructed and, thus, become mediators of children’s peer culture play; how affiliation, inclusion, and exclusion are created and managed to serve local peer culture dynamics rather than in reaction to individuals’ personality attributes; how children and teachers position themselves (in relationship to others) in ways that are more complex than simple labels such as “peer,” “leader,” and “teacher” connote; how the learning of literacy is embedded within school and peer cultures; how participation in school events such as circle time and small group develops over time and is situated within the

larger and particular school and peer cultures; and how multiple aspects of children's subject identities are constructed in play, peer interactions, and school events.

Other researchers have explored similar phenomena without necessarily using the term *peer culture*. For example, Vivian Paley writes of the social worlds of children at play in her many volumes written over the length of her career. In such classics as *Superheroes in the Doll Corner* (1984) Paley interprets classroom dynamics from children's perspectives and explores the meanings of their social dynamics. Similarly, Dyson's links between writing and what she calls the "unofficial world of the classroom" (Dyson, 1997) and Gutierrez and colleagues' (1997) exploration of what they call the "third space" in classroom life evokes images and concerns similar to Corsaro's peer culture notion.

The growing body of work on children's peer cultures makes an important contribution to a set of enduring questions explored by scores of child development and early childhood researchers and teachers. What is the value and the various outcomes of children's play? How does children's play change over time? What are the long-term benefits of children's play? What are children's successful and unsuccessful strategies for interacting with their peers? What contributes to leadership and popularity in socially successful children and conversely, what contributes to peer rejection, isolation, or unpopularity in children who are unsuccessful at such an early age? How do we provide supports and intervention for children who are less successful in social interaction and play? Taken together, these earlier studies have provided us with descriptions of the developmental trajectory (i.e., stages) of children's play, the relationship between child development and adult endpoints, and a perspective (i.e., sociometrics) on various social statuses and their behavioral characteristics and long-term consequences. This larger and important research tradition has given us important guidance to support children at play.

But research that answers these questions reflects adult perspectives, theories and concerns. To fully understand the nature and meanings of children's play, we also need to take into account children's perspectives, a view of the group as well as the individual, and children's views of the social worlds they create. Sociologist William Corsaro knew this and entered children's worlds to see what he would find there. *See also* Peers and Friends.

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Rebecca Kantor and David Fernie

Peers and Friends

Sometime during the second year, young children usually experience large increases in the amount of time they spend interacting with their peers or age mates. As young children's social interactions with peers outside of the family group increases, so does the importance of these relations in shaping their lives and development. This entry will describe some theories or concepts that help us understand peer interactions and explain the types of social interactions and relationships that young children experience. It will also discuss the characteristics and skills of children that affect peer interactions and describe possible short- and long-term consequences of these relations.

Underlying Theories and Concepts

One contemporary framework that is particularly useful in considering children's relations with peers is the *child-by-environment perspective* (e.g., Ladd 2003). This approach tells us that children come to social settings with different sets of traits and skills that help determine the kinds of peer interactions they experience. This approach also suggests that aspects of a particular social setting itself (e.g., a preschool classroom) will likewise have effects on children's interactions and adjustment. Peer social interactions thus become a "two-way street," with children bringing characteristics or social skills to a context, and the peers (and others) in that setting responding and affecting the social relations and the adjustment a child experiences in that setting. Adults interested in understanding young children's peer relations should look closely at the characteristics of the child *and* those of the peer environment, and view them as parts of an interacting system. Efforts to improve children's peer relations or social adjustment may also need to target specific aspects of both the child and peer environment in order to be successful.

Another important idea that shapes our understanding of young children's peer relationships comes from **attachment** theory. This theory suggests that children form peer relationships using a model of the self and others based on their early caregiver relationships (see the section Parenting and Family). Cognitive theorists Jean **Piaget** and Lev **Vygotsky** also suggested that peer interactions play a role in **cognitive development** and problem solving. In their models, conflict (Piaget) and cooperation (Vygotsky) with peers support cognitive development and more advanced thinking and reasoning. Research has supported the idea that children working with peers often display more advanced problem-solving ability than they can when working alone.

The Peer Environment: Interactions and Relationships

In any setting where children are with peers there is a range in the degree of social contact. At one end of the range there are minimal interactions where children seldom communicate with peers or coordinate their activities, for example, short-term interactions with peers they don't know. At the other end of the range are relationships that involve repeated and frequent interactions, intimacy, communication, and cooperation; elaborate pretend games of house or school are examples of this. The degree of cooperation, communication, and interaction that young children are capable of with peers also increases dramatically across early childhood as communication skills, cognitive development, and emotional control improve. Given these different types of relations, it follows that there are likely to be different effects on children participating in them—some of these possible outcomes are discussed below.

Play with peers. Mildred Parten (1933), a pioneer in studying children's peer relations, suggested that preschoolers' social interactions emerge in a sequence that begins with *nonsocial activity*, where toddlers watch others without interaction or engage in solitary, individual play near one another. This is followed by limited interactions in *parallel play*, where children play near each other while doing similar activities but do not try to influence the play of others or cooperate. Next comes the more complex and demanding interactions of *associative play*, where children play separately but interact verbally, exchange toys and ideas, and comment on each other's behavior. Finally, the most complex and demanding play interactions to emerge in older toddlers are labeled *cooperative play*, where children play make-believe games and coordinate intricate pretend roles and activity. While Parten's categories have been elaborated upon, the order that she suggested remains accurate, although we now know that even older children still spend a significant proportion of their time in solitary or parallel play. Only certain kinds of solitary activity, such as high proportions of aimless or unoccupied activity, or a high degree of repetitive motor action, suggest developmental delay or adjustment problems.

Friendships. As children's social abilities develop and their peer interactions increase, they begin to have peers with whom they develop more intimate dyadic relationships, or friendships. While some psychologists argue that younger toddlers may not actually maintain friendships in the sense that school-aged children do, it is clear that even two-year-olds interact more and prefer familiar peers and playmates with whom they have positive relationships. Older toddlers and preschoolers are usually capable of describing their friends and friendships in a way that makes it clear they value and enjoy these one-on-one relationships. Young children's friendships also often involve conflict as well (often more conflict occurs within friendships than with peers who are not friends). Children vary widely in their ability to maintain and repair relationships in the face of conflict, and the degree of conflict present in a friendship also helps define the quality of that relationship. By early childhood most children participate in at least a few close friendships, but relationships vary in quality, with some friendships

characterized by high levels of conflict and stress. Within larger groups of children, there are also networks of dyads that form small groups within classrooms or peer settings, with some children being more socially connected across the different groups, while others are more isolated.

Group relations. As children interact in larger groups (e.g., in preschool classrooms), there are social relations at the group level that are important as well. Researchers have labeled some of these relations as peer acceptance or popularity—this reflects how well liked a child is, in general, by their peer group. Acceptance is not the intimate and dyadic relationship of friendship, but a picture of how well accepted the child is as a playmate. This type of relationship provides children with different social resources than friendships, and it may be more important as an indicator of how easily a child is able to get peer support for completing academic tasks or gain access to peer groups, play materials, or playground equipment.

Children also tend to form dominance hierarchies in their peer groups. This ordering of children according to their power and status often determines which children prevail in conflicts within the group (e.g., over toys or playground equipment). Established dominance hierarchies, though they are formed using verbal or physical conflict, often serve to reduce the level of aggression in groups as children become aware of their roles and the roles of others in the hierarchy.

Child Characteristics: What's Important for Developing Peer Interactions and Relationships?

Traits, behaviors, and peers. An important characteristic in young children's ability to enter into peer relations is their behavior. For example, peers quickly notice which of their age mates tend to more aggressive or withdrawn. Both of these characteristics have a negative impact on children's friendships and the degree to which they are liked or disliked by peers (i.e., accepted vs. rejected). Aggressive children, in particular, are frequently avoided by peers and tend to have lower-quality friendships, with more conflict and less trust or intimacy. Aggression and social withdrawal are both associated with early temperamental characteristics that children display—infants with difficult or active **temperaments** may be more aggressive as toddlers or preschoolers, whereas more inhibited infants tend to be more withdrawn.

Emotional control also appears to be an early ability that supports better peer relations. Toddlers who are highly emotional and have less emotional control, even if they are sociable, often have a more difficult time entering into positive social interactions and maintaining relationships. Preschoolers who are better able to regulate their emotions tend to be more socially competent, have more friends, and are more popular as playmates. While children's tendencies to be more aggressive or withdrawn have strong connections to their genetic makeup and are likely inherited from their parents, the early social environment is also important in shaping their skills and later relations with peers.

Parenting and family. Attachment theory tells us that children's later social relationships are based on an internal model of themselves that they form in their early caregiver interactions. Infants and toddlers with caregivers that give them reliable, sensitive, warm, and caring support tend to become more securely attached. These children trust caregivers and form a more positive caregiver-child bond—those children who receive less consistent or sensitive care are more likely to be insecurely attached. Securely attached children tend to be more socially competent and skilled in interactions with peers and adults and are also more likely to have greater social self-competence. These characteristics, in turn, help children more confidently explore new surroundings and social settings. Research also demonstrates that securely attached toddlers do better navigating the social challenges of preschool and the daily demands of getting along with others.

Parents also directly teach children social skills and/or coach peer behaviors. For example, parents who actively arrange and encourage peer play opportunities for young children tend to have children who are socially well adjusted. How parents oversee these play interactions is also important: parents who are either too intrusive or who don't monitor peer interactions closely enough tend to have preschoolers who are less socially well adjusted later on. Appropriate parental or adult monitoring (including that of teachers) that allows children as much responsibility in their interactions as they may safely handle on their own is helpful for children as they learn to interact with peers independently.

This support for child autonomy, in the context of a warm and supportive relationship and consistent standards for age-appropriate behavior, also helps foster positive peer interactions. Parents who use more authoritarian or coercive practices tend to have children who are more aggressive and more likely to be rejected by peers. In many cultures and communities, teachers also fulfill similar roles to parents as they support positive peer interactions. Warm relationships with teachers, especially those that support appropriate levels of autonomy, also help foster more socially skilled and well-adjusted preschoolers.

Across cultures. As we consider parent and teacher roles in peer relations, it becomes apparent that there is likely to be a lot of variation in parent influence on children's peer relations across cultural settings and communities. As cultural values vary, so too do parent and teacher support for different kinds of relationships or social skills. On one hand, there is remarkable agreement among cross-cultural studies (e.g., in China and in Canada) that positive and supportive relations with parents are linked to having well-adjusted children. Parents in China, however, are more likely to value group cohesion and may encourage their children to be more cautious, dependent, and self-restrained. In their culture, shy and quiet children are more likely to be labeled as good children—these beliefs are not typically found in the same degree in North American or European families. Similarly, Chinese parents may socialize their children to be more behaviorally inhibited than North American children—this may be an adaptive trait for Chinese toddlers (e.g., Chen, Hasting, and Rubin, 1998). In addition to social behaviors, the particular kinds of relationships that are valued may also differ. Chinese parents

are more likely to value cooperative and less conflictual relationships than North American parents (this is not to say that relationships of North American children are less adaptive—only that they often include more conflict). Psychologists believe that this is related to cultural values of individualism/autonomy versus group identity/collectivism—Western cultures such as those typical of North America typically place a higher value on individualism, while other cultures value collectivist ideals more highly.

This evidence suggests that the social skills and peer relations that are “best” in a culture or community are likely to vary along with cultural norms. It seems clear that an accurate understanding of peer relations and their effects on adjustment must look at the cultural norms and practices in the community of interest.

Outcomes: What Are Some of the Long-Term Effects of Peer Relations?

The interaction of child characteristics with the peer context clearly makes up an important part of young children’s lives. Accordingly, we can also describe some important outcomes that have consistently been linked to early peer relations. While it is a difficult job to tease out the effects of the relations from those of the child’s individual behavior, some outcomes have shown up consistently and over long enough periods for us to describe here. Whether the peer context is a source of support or stress, it is likely to impact children’s futures in a number of ways.

Academic and cognitive effects. Children who have a history of being rejected by peers are more likely than accepted children to have long-term adjustment problems, especially in academic settings. This may be especially true for those with longer histories of rejection. Young children who begin preschool or **kindergarten** with peer relationship problems and especially those who have long-term peer problems, are often less engaged in the classroom or achieve lower grades later on. These problems can extend to truancy, school drop-out, and delinquency in adolescence. Children who have no friends or have only a few friendships of poor quality are also more likely to have academic adjustment problems, as well as social and emotional difficulties.

Social and psychological adjustment. Rejected children also often have long-term psychological problems such as increased aggression, substance abuse, internalizing problems, and attention problems. More accepted children typically have better long-term adjustment patterns. Children who have quality friendships *and* view their relationships positively also appear to be better adjusted psychologically and see their friendships as a source of social and emotional support. In kindergarten classrooms, for example, children with friends were happier at school, viewed classmates as more supportive, and had more positive attitudes about school. Children with no close friendships (as opposed to even one or two), in particular, appear especially at risk for more negative attitudes and later adjustment problems.

In sum, children's peer relations in early childhood take different forms and serve different functions as children develop. It is clear that children, their families, and their schools all have important characteristics that affect the quality and adjustment outcomes of peer relations. Children's temperament and family environment impact the skills and behaviors that they bring to peer contexts. The interactions and relationships in those contexts, in turn, shape later adjustment. The social characteristics and behaviors children display with peers in early childhood are important in shaping the peer relations that occur. Understanding more about children's peer interactions and how the processes they experience in these relations might affect later adjustment are central to any understanding of young children's welfare and development. *See also* Culture; Parents and Parent Involvement; Peer Culture; Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Eric S. Buhs and Melanie S. Rudy

Pestalozzi, Johann (1746-1827)

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, often referred to as one of the most influential modern educators, was born in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1746. Johann's father died when he was only five, but his mother and sister managed to raise the young boy and send him off to school when he was nine. Although he was not a particularly good student, he always felt that education was the ultimate answer to the problems of society.

Originally, Pestalozzi studied theology at the University of Zurich and planned to become a preacher, but due to his shyness, he soon turned to the study of law. While studying, Pestalozzi became greatly impressed by the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau and aspired to put these theories into practice. In 1767, Pestalozzi visited an experimental farm in the canton of Bern where he learned many experimental methods of farming and was impressed by the farmer's interest in the welfare of his workers. In 1768, Pestalozzi secured a loan and bought a farm nearby, which he called "Neuhof." In 1769, he met and married Anna Schulthess, a well-to-do, well-educated woman who ultimately shared Pestalozzi's successes and failures for the next fifty years. When the agricultural experiment

failed, he turned his farm into an educational experiment for poor villagers. In 1774, Pestalozzi assembled a group of social castoffs at Neuhof and set them to work in his spinning mill. He also taught them some industrial skills in hopes of bettering their position. When this endeavor turned into a financial disaster, he turned toward education as a way to elevate these citizens from their poverty.

In 1781, Pestalozzi published his famous novel *Leonard and Gertrude*. This book described many of Pestalozzi's ideas about education and social justice. Pestalozzi was later asked by the village of Stanz to set up a school for the many children who had been orphaned by the recent wars. Although his school lasted only a short year, Pestalozzi next moved to the Castle of Burgdorf to open another school. While at Burgdorf, he wrote a systematic treatise on Education entitled "How Gertrude Teaches Her Children." In 1805, he moved his school to its final location in Yverdon. Students and teachers traveled from many nations to experience this "new" educational system, and returned home to improve their own schools. Here, Pestalozzi labored with his ideals of education and appropriate treatment of young children. In 1815, his wife died, and in 1825, the school at Yverdon closed because of dissension among Pestalozzi's teachers. In 1827, Pestalozzi died, alone and destitute.

Pestalozzi's lessons proceeded from the concrete to the abstract, from simple to complex. Classrooms were child-centered, where children learned from doing activities rather than being told about experiences. Children would first observe activities and interact with materials, and then they would express their impressions of the objects as they perceived them, and finally they would form their own understanding of the experiences. Pestalozzi stressed that early education needed to emphasize experiences, not book learning. Through concrete experiences, the child moves into abstract understandings of the world around it.

Pestalozzi's methods look quite familiar to students in our own school of the twenty-first century, but these methods were quite new in Pestalozzi's day. Pestalozzi felt that all children should be educated equally, regardless of gender or economic conditions. His approach to early childhood education stemmed from his love for children and his conviction that each child held the promise of individual potential. He further believed that educators should not intrude upon that natural development and that instruction reflecting the needs of the individual rather than the group as a whole.

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Martha Latorre

Philanthropy and Young Children

It has been argued that organized philanthropy remains one of the least known and most pervasive of financial networks throughout the United States, as it

operates with remarkable freedom. Waldemar Nielson summarizes philanthropy as follows:

As a group, they are institutions like no others, operating in their own unique degree of abstraction from external imposed rules. They are private, and yet their activities cut across a broad spectrum of public concerns and public issues. They are not only important power centers in American life not controlled by market forces, electoral constituencies, bodies of members, or even formally established canons of conduct, all of which give them their extraordinary flexibility and potential influence. Yet they remain little known and even less understood, shrouded in mystery, inspiring in some the highest hopes and expectations and in others dark fears and resentments. By some they are seen as the Hope of the Future, our Secret Weapon for progress; by others as our Fifth Column; and by still others as our invisible Fourth Branch of Government. (quoted in Watson, 1993, p. 1)

Although early education receives only a small portion of foundation assets, private foundations have played a significant role in supporting in early childhood education, in increasing opportunities for young children and in advancing the early childhood profession in the United States of America. Two major themes have characterized foundation giving in the field: private foundation funding has (1) sparked innovation and experimentation and (2) elevated attention to systems change. In spite of these contributions, enduring and emerging concerns remain about the impact of philanthropy on the field of early care and education.

Foundations Promote Innovation and Experimentation

Private philanthropy has been a major source of support for many innovations in early childhood education. These innovations were critical as early educators worked to develop evidence about the effectiveness and impact of their work, and to build public will for improved early care and educational policies and practices. Innovative projects and model programs, as well as experimentation with replication strategies, have been the cornerstone of the work done by early childhood specialty foundations such as the A.L. Mailman Foundation and the Foundation for Child Development. Larger, comprehensive national foundations such as Ford, Kellogg, and Mott have also played significant roles at different points in time. Together, these efforts have sponsored new approaches, leveraged strategic opportunities and advanced critical issues that have informed the early care and education field.

To illustrate the range of projects that have been funded, a few examples follow:

- The Harris Foundation, established in 1946, helped establish the Erikson Institute in 1966 to train teachers for **Head Start**. In 1986, Harris also helped to initiate a public-private partnership, the Beethoven experiment, which brought prenatal care and exemplary early childhood practice to mothers-to-be in the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago. Beethoven's ultimate goal was to insure that these children would be "ready for school" when they entered **kindergarten**. The Beethoven Project tested critical early learning theories in a real-life community-based setting, drawing national attention to successful **early interventions** in the very first years of life.

- In 1958, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** national office was established partly as a result of gifts from the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund. In 1984, the **accreditation** system was field tested in four sites with the support of several small foundations.

In the 1990s, what is now The Early Childhood Equity Alliance was launched by the Kellogg Foundation with later support from the A. L. Mailman Family Foundation, the Peppercorn Foundation, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, and others. The Alliance nurtures and connects people engaged in racial and social justice education and action with and for young children, families, and communities.

Foundations Work to Achieve Systems Change

In addition to their support of “silo” projects, foundations have also supported efforts to leverage public funding for young children and to support systems change. This work is particularly noteworthy when one considers the fact that many philanthropic organizations were founded without any specific charitable purpose in mind. Rockefeller and Carnegie were rare among philanthropists because they wanted to leverage their gifts by influencing patterns of government spending. Perhaps only a small number of foundations had in mind what Neilsen calls “scientific philanthropy”—getting at the root causes of social ills rather than merely ameliorating the symptoms (see Watson, 1993).

Nevertheless, foundations can be credited with drawing attention to neglected areas of child development and boosting activity in important areas through strategic grant making. A few examples include the following:

- In the 1970s when the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation established its interest in child welfare, its support of this work through several national organizations is credited with promoting change. In the 1990s, the W.K. Kellogg’s “Families for Kids” imitative, along with work of the Dave Thomas Foundation, combined program, media, evaluation and advocacy tools to help create a movement for federal and state policy changes affecting the movement of foster children into permanent homes.
- The Caroline and Sigmund Schott Foundation played a pivotal role in establishing the nonprofit organization that led a state-wide effort to achieve universal preschool in the state of Massachusetts.
- The Foundation for Child Development has played a leadership role in research and dissemination of information.

Policy change has also been promoted by foundations’ support of many important commissions and committees addressing children’s issues. The 1991 report of the bipartisan National Commission on Children is credited with forcing social conservatives to acknowledge the need for economic supports for children (Schmitt, 2004). Similarly The Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children issued the influential report “Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Young Children” in 1994.

Recognizing the limitations of work being done by individual funders, several collaborative efforts by grant makers have been established to foster strategic thinking and sharing.

- Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families was established in 1985 as an affinity group of the Council on Foundations. Today, representatives from more than 500 private, corporate, community and family foundations participate in its activities.

- To better target interest in young children among those funders deeply committed to early childhood, in 1994 an informal group of staff from five foundations came together to create the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative. Today ECFC membership includes about 30 foundations who seek to increase the visibility and importance of quality in early childhood care and education and to increase private and public investment. This affiliation of individuals, often drawn from the early childhood profession, is deeply immersed in supporting early childhood education for the long haul. By 1995 it was decided to form a funding pool to support major leadership initiatives. Two such initiatives had been funded by 2004.
- With respect to specific funding issues, groups of foundations often come together to address specific concerns. For example, today The Packard Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the Schumann Fund for New Jersey and the McCormick Tribune Foundation are collaborating with the Pew Charitable Trusts around universal preschool issues.

Limits of Philanthropy

Major issues are associated with foundation funding in the field of early care and education. Chief among them are the following seven concerns.

1. **Foundations constrain the advancement of work in the early education field because of their short term funding cycles.** Most foundation grant commitments are for a term of one to three years. This funding pattern may not allow for the development of strong institutions that can plan for and sustain long-term change.
2. **Foundation funding strategies are typically project focused and categorical.** By establishing their priorities in interest areas (i.e., in housing, health, education), foundation funding has, in many ways, mirrored the federal program structure. Single issue organizations may be favored in this context. This structure, however, does not reflect the interrelationships among these categories in children's lives. Further, the project focus of most funding has the consequence of offering relatively little support and few resources to support strategic planning, capacity-building or fund raising activities. Moreover, "projects" are often ill equipped to address the structural and root causes of child well-being such as poverty; to focus on critical activities such as constituency building; or to create a coherent vision for social change compared to reactive activity reflecting social trends.
3. **Foundations may have unrealistic outcomes and accountability requirements for grantees.** Categorical project funding is often tied to the expectation that grantees will produce specific outcomes within a certain timeframe. In turn, grantees have often complained that these outcomes reflect unrealistic expectations about what can be produced in return for relatively small amounts of money and time.
4. **Foundations have been a financial base of child advocacy organizations.** Many early education or multiissue child advocacy programs receive a majority of their support from private dollars. This "good news" is accompanied by a major shortcoming: while foundations have played a vital role in sustaining child advocacy groups, these groups are, in turn, very dependent on foundation funding, finding it difficult to develop a diverse funding base or to develop hard revenue sources on which to rely. As a result, important initiatives, such as the Early Childhood Equity Alliance, operate under difficult financial circumstances. Many other initiatives, such as the

Ecumenical Child Care organization, found it difficult to consistently sustain their level of organizational activity due to fiscal challenges.

5. **Foundations are not inclined to invest in advocacy activities and social change.** Progressive foundations woefully underfund public intellectuals, policy thinkers and policy work, relative to more conservative organizations. This is argued to have a limiting impact on the capacity of children's organizations to disseminate information, engage in strategic media work, interact with policy makers and coordinate research and advocacy. Although there are certainly exceptions to this tendency, evidence shows that few foundations seem willing to fund advocacy activities (Covington, 2001). Rather, foundation funding has largely focused on funding discrete projects or programs not connected to the more fundamental economic and policy questions of the early childhood profession or the well-being of young children themselves.
6. **There is an increasing tendency for foundations to design and direct their own initiatives.** A major trend in philanthropy is that foundations are increasing designing and directing their own initiatives, and working through grantees to achieve those goals. In this way, foundations may have undue influence on foundation-dependent organizations who grumble about being the "implementers" of foundation-directed initiatives. Further, with a rapid growth of new foundations, one finds heightened interest in "venture philanthropy"—new donors, exemplified by persons such as Bill Gates, seek a more engaged and directed approach to philanthropy. These venture philanthropists show a renewed focus on building partnerships, exit strategies, accountability measures and building networks. Grantees may find that they have to structure their work around the funding initiatives of the foundations.
7. **Grantees often feel that the unequal partnerships with foundations effectively limit the vision for the field of early care and education.** The "unequal partnership" is evidenced by many factors, including a lack of feedback about negative funding decisions. Thus, dialog and discussion and learning do not always occur, sometimes fostering a mutual lack of candor as foundations influence choices of strategic issues, strategies and methods.

Conclusion

According to Watson,

Traditional philanthropy operates according to self-defined goals of charity for the poor and the promotion of high culture. Charity is extremely gratifying for those who engage in it, as evidenced by the symbolic link between arts and its patrons. But what makes traditional grantmaking easy—gratification—is precisely what makes empowerment as a strategy for grantmaking so difficult. Building capacity among powerless people requires the creation of alternative sites of decision making, validation, and power. In the abstract, these issues may not seem to be troubling, but in the real world, they frequently involve choices between well-run institutions that are known and loved, and weak, emerging organizations about which foundation boards and staff have little knowledge and with which have even less contact. Empowerment is threatening because it is messy. When people have the capacity to act for themselves, they frequently do—and not necessarily in ways that people who have acted for them anticipate or welcome. (Watson, 1993, p. 8)

However important and strategic foundation giving may be, it is important to remember that private giving is dwarfed by state spending. Ultimate growth in early education services is tied to how well those public resources can be leveraged. *See also* Advocacy and Leadership in Early childhood Education; Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Valora Washington

Physical Education. *See* Curriculum, Physical Development

Piaget, Jean (1896–1980)

Jean Piaget is often believed to have been a Swiss psychologist, but psychology for him was only a means of studying epistemological questions scientifically. For centuries, epistemologists had debated questions such as “How do we know what we think we know?” and Piaget insisted that these questions should be answered scientifically rather than by philosophical speculation. His doctorate from the University of Neuchatel (1918) was in natural sciences with a dissertation on the mollusks of Valais. This training in zoology led him to study knowledge from a perspective that encompassed all animals’ adaptation to their environment. This perspective is what took him to psychology, to try to explain the development of human knowledge by looking for parallels with children’s process of acquiring knowledge.

As Piaget said in *Piaget on Piaget* (1977), his theory is almost always misunderstood. “Some think I am an empiricist. . . . Others think I am a neo-maturationist or even an innatist. . . . But I am a constructivist,” he said. (The term *constructivism*, too, later led to confusion because there are many kinds of constructivisms.)

Piaget's opposition to empiricism is especially important for early childhood education, which has long been dominated by empiricist thinking. Empiricists believe, in essence, that human beings acquire knowledge by internalizing it directly from the external world through the senses. As a constructivist, Piaget proved that human beings create their own knowledge from the inside, constantly modifying it by interacting with people and objects. Human knowledge is organized through a logico-mathematical framework that takes many years for each individual to construct, he said, and human beings see in the environment only what their own logico-mathematical organization enables them to see. This theory was sketched in *The Construction of Reality in the Child* (1937/1954) and elaborated in more than sixty books.

Piaget was acutely aware that science only describes and explains phenomena. He was careful to say that the application of science to practical problems like education was beyond the scope of his work. By thus limiting his concerns to the description and explanation of knowledge, he gave to educators a scientific foundation for their art. Just as medicine is an art based on scientific explanations of illnesses, he said, education must become an art based on a scientific explanation of how children learn (Piaget, 1948/1973). By limiting his work to the description and explanation of knowledge, he also enabled educators to understand the scientific revolution his theory brought to behaviorism. Just as the heliocentric theory revolutionized the geocentric theory by extending the scope of the old theory and turning it upside down, Piaget's constructivism extended the scope of behaviorism and turned it upside down. As a biologist, he said that all animals (including human beings) adapt to reward and punishment, but human beings are much more complicated than lower animals.

Part of Piaget's constructivism concerns children's moral development (Piaget, 1932). He made a distinction between the morality of heteronomy and the morality of autonomy. The former is the morality of obedience to ready-made rules and people in authority taught through reward and punishment—a morality compatible with behaviorism. The morality of autonomy, on the other hand, is the morality of each individual making his or her own decisions by taking relevant factors into account. Piaget showed with evidence that all children begin by being heteronomous but that some are raised to become increasingly autonomous. When asked why it was bad to lie, for example, young, heteronomous children replied, "Because you get punished," and when Piaget asked if it would be all right to lie if one were not punished, these children answered "Yes." More autonomous children replied, on the other hand, that lying is bad because people wouldn't be able to believe each other if they lied. Piaget was not an educator, but he explained how some adults foster the development of autonomy in children. His theory thus has much to offer for the advancement of education.

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Constance Kamii

PITC. See Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers

Play

Play is both a noun and a verb. When describing the activity of children, it is more aptly defined as *playing*—a state of being that children experience and make happen. Even when children are playing, they often go in and out of the play scene, demonstrating the metacognitive activity associated with this complex behavior. In spite of a wealth of lay and professional literature on this topic, there remains a great deal of ambiguity about the nature and significance of play in children's lives and as it might contribute to their learning and development.

One response to this ambiguity has been to develop criteria for determining what is and is not play. Some guidelines have proven difficult to interpret, such as the requirement that play be *intrinsically motivated* (Smith & Vollstedt, 1985). Others, such as the view that play produces *positive affect* or is *flexible, voluntary, egalitarian*, and (typically) *nonliteral* (i.e., based on pretense), distinguish play from other activities much of the time but not always (Sutton-Smith & Kelly-Byrne, 1984). These varying criteria reflect the challenge that this seemingly natural behavior presents to those who wish to better understand and support children's play. They are also the results of diverse theoretical interpretations of this human activity.

Theories of Play in Early Childhood Practice

Contemporary interpretations of play within the context of early childhood education are drawn from diverse theoretical interpretations of play, including its course of development and its role in the child's development. Evidence of the following theories of play can be found in many U.S. early childhood education settings.

Psychoanalytic theory and play. Those from within the psychoanalytic tradition established by **Sigmund Freud** have long been interested in helping children whose problems stem from difficulty in managing feelings. They have shown how helpful it is to focus on children's abilities to express and cope with feelings, not just because feelings such as anger and love are powerful but also because feelings produce powerful *intrapsychic conflicts*. The analytically minded also focus on feelings of helplessness, believing that children can become overwhelmed by their smallness and their feelings of helplessness. They need help to gain a healthy sense of being in control.

This focus on problems associated with feelings has a great deal to do with children's play. Theorists working out of the psychoanalytic tradition have shown

how play can reveal children's struggles with conflicting feelings. **Play therapy** has a well-respected tradition for helping children to use play to master their feelings and sense of helplessness—as when young children are helped to recover from a painful hospital experience by helping them, in play, to take on the role of doctor—giving needles, bad-tasting medicine, and so forth. The view is that through such play, children can regain a sense of being in control. Teachers such as Vivian Paley understand that **play as storytelling**, and especially superhero play, is one way in which children acknowledge fears, test imaginary strengths and capabilities, and cope with their feelings of helplessness.

Cognitive–developmental theory and play. Cognitive–developmental approaches focus on explaining development in terms of structural changes that define different *stages*. The great Swiss psychologist **Jean Piaget** identified three broad stages of play's development: a stage dominated by nonsymbolic *practice games* (e.g., repeatedly jumping off a step), followed by a stage dominated by make-believe and *symbolic games*, followed by a stage dominated by *games with rules* (Piaget, 1962). These stages describe the form or structure of play, not its themes or content.

Piaget saw play as serving the important function of *consolidating* thinking skills as well as, knowledge and information that children have recently acquired. A simple example of teachers' uses of this principle can be found in their responses to young children's interest in construction machinery—diggers, bulldozers, steamrollers—and the process of repairing roads and putting up buildings. If given appropriate play materials (toy diggers, bulldozers, steamrollers) and opportunities to play, young children will build their own ditches and bridges, using play to consolidate what they have learned through observing outside the classroom. The presence of sand and water tables in the early childhood classroom and the postponement of games with rules until at least the primary grades give further evidence of the influence of Piaget's stage-based interpretation of play on contemporary practice.

Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist and educator, is another well-known cognitive–developmental theorist whose work has served as the foundation of **socio-cultural theory**. As an educator as well as a psychologist, Vygotsky was interested in how children learn and how learning contributes to development. Vygotsky emphasized the way parents and teachers help children develop by working within their *zone of proximal development*, that psychological “space” just beyond children's comfort zone where they are used to functioning but not so far beyond that they cannot stretch and grow with the support of more competent others.

In the case of play, Vygotsky saw young children using their play as a self-made zone of proximal development, a boot-strapping operation to help them *free thought from perception* (as when they imagine what is not immediately in front of them). Vygotsky regarded play as a *leading source* of children's **cognitive development** (Vygotsky, 1976). Teachers who create time and space for children to engage in complex collaborative and constructive play are influenced by this view of play as it both challenges and supports children's learning.

Contemporary interpretations of children's learning reflect two major shifts in how cognitive development is conceived, the first of which is a move away from a linear model of progress from cognition as fantasy-based to thinking that is entirely determined by logic (Harris, 2000). Piaget's view was that children outgrow make-believe by becoming more logical, when, for example, they give up make-believe play for games with rules. Contemporary scholars argue that imagination continues to develop well into adulthood, as evidenced by imagination in older children's and adolescents' play (Singer & Singer, 1990).

The other shift has been toward appreciating the interface among culture, play, and cognitive development—a relationship Vygotsky identified that anthropologists and cultural psychologists have documented in communities around the world. Decades of studies in diverse cultures demonstrate a variety of ways in which the sociocultural context supports children's development. In many cultures work, not play, is the principal domain where children are supported to think and develop, and these children acquire the skills, dispositions, and understandings that are associated with healthy development. In some settings those qualities typically assigned to play seem to characterize other forms of child activity. For example, observers of **Reggio Emilia** classrooms who see children deeply engaged in long-term *progettazione* are often challenged to distinguish between children hard at work and children absorbed in play. In the classroom and on the playground, children's imagination, intelligence, friendships, and exuberance characterize their joint activities.

Socio-cultural and ecological theories and play. As indicated, children's engagement with the material and social worlds occurs within multiple and nested contexts (home, neighborhood, etc.) that deeply affect whether and how children play. Theories that explain play in terms of contextual influences are often referred to collectively as *cultural-ecological theories*.

With respect to play, culture can be found in the smallest details—in an offhand reference to a television show during doll-play, in the particular materials chosen for building a play house, in the preference for one type of play over another, in whether or not parents encourage children to play, and in whether certain kinds of play are considered good or bad. Much can be learned about cultural influences on play from surface matters, details that can be observed and measured. There are now numerous studies on the interface between **play and gender** stereotypes.

Socio-cultural theory also points to other types of influences, including underlying assumptions, values, and worldviews as reflected in cultural routines and social relations. For example, some cultures value and support patterns of relationship that are *interdependent*. Within such a context, a child's development will be measured in terms of the child's capacity to successfully participate in collaborative activities that emphasize the family or the community rather than the individual. In these cultures, harmony among group members is prized and play in such a context is less likely to feature competition. In contrast, cultures that are categorized as *individualistic* will emphasize autonomous behavior and a capacity for individual achievement. Play in such a context is more likely to feature, for example, individual ownership of toys as well as competition. Early childhood educators are increasingly aware of the extent to which children bring

cultural values, including those regarding gender and race, into their play spaces and activities.

Such cultural features are associated not only with how children play, but with how play is supported and encouraged. In the dominant North American culture, most assume that play is good, even essential, for children; and that adults should be actively involved in supporting and at times coaching children's play. Another common assumption is that children's age-mates are natural and appropriate play partners. These assumptions are also culturally embedded. That is, members of diverse cultures hold different beliefs about the nature and value of children's play (New, 1994).

Evolutionary and comparative theories and play. Evolutionary theories have been particularly important in developing the rhetoric of progress. Jerome Bruner (1972) argued that play is a major precursor to the emergence of language and symbolic behavior in higher primates and humans, noting that old-world monkeys play less than later-evolving new-world monkeys, who seem to use play to imitate and practice important skills.

The study of play among nonhuman animals has also contributed enormously to the development of play theory. Comparative studies have dispelled a number of common misconceptions about play, including the belief that play is principally a form of practice for the future. For example, the "galumphing" movement characterizing play fighting among juvenile baboons exists side by side with remarkably agile movements carried out when fighting is for real; the one does not lead to the other though.

Perhaps what is most important about the research having to do with evolution and nonhuman animals is that it has bolstered the argument for studying children's play. Play, it turns out, is ubiquitous. It connects not only different groups within the human species but different animal species as well. When we play with a family pet or observe a colt cavorting, we feel this connection. Paradoxically, then, by studying the diverse ways that different species play, evolutionary and comparative theorists have fostered a sense of unity among all animal species.

Play Rhetorics and Controversies

Play theorist Brian Sutton-Smith has proposed we focus on *play rhetorics* as a means of conceptualizing the nature and functions of play (Sutton-Smith, 1995). He suggests that there are several rhetorics of children's play, each emphasizing some presumed general function. One in particular has been embraced by many in the field of early childhood education: the *rhetoric of progress*. Within this particular rhetoric, play is discussed as being good for children's physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development. Educators talk about play preparing children for the future. In spite of continuing controversies regarding evidence (or the lack of it) that might support this interpretation, that play promotes progress has been the dominant rhetoric among scholars as well as among parents, educators, and ordinary people in industrialized cultures such as the United States.

Insufficient evidence for making claims about play's positive functions isn't the only shortcoming of the rhetoric of progress. Critics suggest that the rhetoric

of progress can lead to the idealization of play and to overlooking its darker, harmful side. A view of play as “good for children” can also mean that adults are unprepared for times when they need to stop or prevent some forms of play—such as when some children find it “fun” to bully. This idealization of play may also be used to justify taking control of children’s play to enhance its beneficial properties, based on the belief that, if play is essential for children’s future, it shouldn’t be left to children to choose how to play.

While researchers debate the merits and meanings of their studies on children’s play, many believe that play need not be justified on the grounds that it prepares children for the future. Rather, it is a vital and challenging activity that helps children thrive in the present. But even this last statement is itself based upon a rhetoric.

Development of Play

A developmental perspective on play provides a way of evaluating children’s play and whether and how it is maturing over time. In particular, a developmental perspective focuses on the degree to which play becomes more complex and organized, more sophisticated and subtle, and more flexible and self-aware. For example, a parent may notice a child shifting from “feeding” her doll to having her doll “feed” another doll. This change from using a doll figure as a passive agent only to using a doll figure as an active agent demonstrates the child’s developing capacity to decenter and coordinate perspectives and roles. In this example, development is defined by changes in the play’s structure, not by changes in its content. The content is the same, feeding a baby. This distinction between *structure* and *content* is crucial to understanding how play develops and how children develop as well.

Understanding how play develops also requires understanding development within differing play *media*. For example, play with dolls has a different developmental trajectory than does play with wooden blocks. Doll play develops to the extent that children come to use dolls to enact narratives and create story worlds. Block play develops to the extent that children come to use blocks to build three-dimensional constructions with specific contours and specific spaces. In doll play, then, children demonstrate and elaborate upon their understandings of the social and relational world. In block play, children extend their capacities to plan, design, and create, to think about objects and space. In developing their play within any given medium, children usually begin by first exploring the properties and potentials of the medium itself. Only after spending time exploring do children normally use a play medium for symbolic or representational purposes (Scarlett et al., 2004).

Play within the Early Childhood Classroom

In most U.S. early childhood classrooms, a variety of play forms and materials are typically present: small manipulative toys and games in the form of puzzles, connecting blocks, and pattern-making materials; an area designated as “house-keeping,” where children’s make-believe or pretend play is expected to take

place; and an area set aside for constructive play—space that may take up as much as one-fourth of the room, or may be limited to a small corner. In addition to classroom areas dedicated to play, some early childhood programs have outdoor areas adjacent to the classroom, while others have access to larger playgrounds shared with other groups of children. These spaces and materials reflect financial resources, time allocation, and pedagogical perspectives on what and how children should learn—including understandings and views of the role of play in early childhood education.

Two forms of play have received particular attention by early childhood educators: socio-dramatic play and constructive play—though often the two occur together. Both socio-dramatic and constructive play appear to make particular contributions to children’s early development.

Make-believe play. Early childhood has often been described as the golden age of make-believe. Vygotsky suggests that the capacity and motivation for rich and imaginative make-believe play comes, in part, from the young child’s basic predicament. On the one hand, the young child can symbolize not only what is directly in front of her but also wishes and fantasies. On the other hand, she has so many wishes that cannot be satisfied—to drive a car, to control her parents—that play serves as a valuable means of acting upon these wishes. Furthermore, make-believe play also allows children to explore topics they find fascinating—whether it’s dinosaurs, space travel, or music videos. Psycho-analytic theories suggest that children also use make-believe play to manage their anxieties. Capturing the monster, rocking the baby, and escaping the enemy are examples of play responses to real and imagined fears.

Make-believe play has long been recognized as a supportive context for language, social, and cognitive development. Recent observations stress the contributions of make-believe play for developing narrative as a *framework for thinking* (Singer & Singer, 1990). The distinction here is between *paradigmatic* and *narrative frameworks* for thinking. Paradigmatic frameworks organize thinking around propositions, distinctions, and logic. They are used in conversations where explanation and argument are what matter most. Narrative frameworks organize thinking around events and characters. They are used in conversations where describing real and imagined dramas is what matters most. Each framework has its place in the ongoing need to understand and know reality.

Make-believe play also supports children’s emotional development and capacity for self-regulation. Not only do children learn to moderate their behaviors to stay within the play-script; make-believe play supports emotional development by helping children express emotions and impulses symbolically. When young children engage in joint pretend play, they learn to coordinate their own perspectives with those of others. The challenge of “‘staying with the story’” serves as a powerful incentive for children to integrate and coordinate their own interests and desires with those of others; and to learn how to negotiate multiple points of view.

Constructive play. Among U.S. educators and parents, there is a selective bias toward supporting the sort of play in which a child is trying to construct something,

such as a fort made with blocks (Forman, 1998). Certainly, educators understand that make-believe play is not the only sort of play that supports children's development and their relationships with one another. When young children play alongside each other, whether while feeding dolls or building block towers, they pay attention to and imitate each other and, as observed decades ago by **Mildred Parten** (1932), soon enough join together in more complex and collaborative play activity. Play thus supports not only developmental, but social aims. Children learn to share materials and space with peers, and to make and keep friends. Constructive play often creates such a context for children's social and emotional development. Even make-believe or dramatic play becomes constructive play when children construct the setting and props to support their full-blown story.

Much of the research on constructive play has focused on its contributions to children's cognitive development. As children consider how best to construct a drawbridge or a roof that will be stable, they engage in hypothesis generating and problem solving that provides insights into their cognitive processes. As children's constructions become more structurally complex with age, they increasingly utilize symbols to represent components that might have previously been left to chance. Thus the object and its referent serve as windows into children's thinking about the world. As children observe and compare their efforts, they seek ways to describe their structures, benefiting linguistically as well as intellectually by reflecting on and analyzing their efforts.

In settings where children's play is valued, there are a variety of forms of support that make a difference in what and how children play. Adults support play's development, not just in broad ways such as by helping children feel secure and confident, but also in more focused ways such as by suggesting extensions of play—"Is the baby hungry?"—and by helping children fit Lego bricks together. Physical settings support play's development by offering conditions and materials to play with, whether it's a lake and beach to play at skipping rocks, a jungle gym to play at climbing and swinging, or a shelf of blocks to play at building a fort. Children support each other's play and development, especially by extending or suggesting new lines of play. Children support their own development through their active engagement and problem solving. The **teachers' role** in supporting play is now receiving particular attention among early childhood educators.

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that a bulk of the early childhood professional literature extols the virtues of play in the classroom, recent policy initiatives, including **No Child Left Behind**, have left teachers faced with the challenge of trying to incorporate play into a classroom that is now subject to heightened academic expectations. As some scholars attempt to reconceptualize play as an ethical and moral dimension of childhood, others are giving increased attention to the many ways in which play can be used to support children's early preacademic skills and understandings. Recent play scholarship highlights its improvisational nature and

suggests that the capacity to engage in sustained pretend play is foundational to the development of creativity, conversational competence, and literacy (Sawyer, 1997). As the controversy continues about the nature and role of play in the early childhood classroom, there is consensus about play's central importance to children themselves. Play's fascination—to children and to the adults who observe them—ensures that it will continue to be a topic of study in our efforts to better understand and utilize play as it enhances children's lives, their learning and development.

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W. George Scarlett and Rebecca S. New

Play and Gender

Gender is an organizing schema for many social interactions and is constructed through multiple social contexts, including children's planned and spontaneous play with one another. Play is a central force in the lives of most young children and serves to both reflect and promote their cognitive, communication, social-emotional and sensory-motor development. As part of children's social-emotional growth, play provides the context for children to explore their notions of identity, including their gender formation. Gender is an important part of the "sense of self" they are creating in their interactions with the world (Cherland 1994). As they develop their identity, they perform behaviors associated with their sex and their gender and the managing of social activities to proclaim membership in a particular gender.

The following scenario depicts typical stereotypes of gender differences, in this instance in play, as girls engage in homemaking and fashion themes and other more sedentary small muscle activities while boys engage in more competitive, rough and tumble, and construction activities. Gender preferences for sex-stereotypic activities and toys begin to appear for children as young as 2 years old (Garvey 2000). Play provides one of the earliest domains both at home and in school where gendered narratives and activities are shaped and take on personal meanings for identity formation.

A 4-year-old girl, Ginny, plays in the housekeeping center. Ginny pretends to be the mommy. She assigns Audrey, another 4-year-old, the role of the baby, and to Peter the roles of a Daddy and a plumber. Peter only stays in this scenario for a very short time and then runs off to join a group of boys in the block area.

Young children become gendered persons as they negotiate with each other in a participation structure of differentiated roles, rights, obligations, intentions and actions within a classroom (Ferne, Davies, Kantor, and McMurray 1993). They enact these activities through their choice of clothes, materials and other props, the roles they assume, negotiate and attribute to others, and the peers they exclude or include within their play (Corsaro 1985). Their play becomes a safe haven to try on new roles, experiment with identity, negotiate what fits, vent feelings, and even choose their own endings. Pretend play, the most open-ended of all activities, allows children to try out possibilities without suffering the penalties that otherwise might accompany such actions.

Gender differences are universal, but their particular features appear to be shaped by culture and environment. The example of rough and tumble play illustrates this dual principle, as a type of play evident not only primarily with boys in the United States but also among the boys in Mistecans of Mexican and the Taira of Okinawa. However, the girls of the Pilaga Indians and the Kung of Botswana also engage in rough and tumble play (Garvey 2000).

There have been many theories attributed to better understanding gender differences and the role of early childhood educators in fostering children's identity formation. Some theories propose a type of sponge model in which children learn about their gender through their experiences with their social institutions such as families, media, and educators. From this perspective, children become a product of their society's values. This image of identity formation ignores the fact that children do not receive one message from these institutions about their identity but potentially many different messages from many different sources. Furthermore, it fails to explain why children accept or reject dominant understandings and how they make their choices between alternative and dominant understandings.

Contributions from a poststructuralist framework expand on these modernist theories by understanding identity formation as a complex interaction between a person's gender, race, class and sexuality. Children are born into a social world with preexisting social structures and meanings. The relationships they have between individuals and social institutions are fluid, interdependent and, mutually constructing. Identity formation is a process in which the child actively

constructs meaning through reading and interpreting experiences, but is not free to construct any meanings or any identities they want (McNaughton 2000). According to Walkerdine (1981) and Harre and Davies (2000) children develop their identities by forming their subjectivity (i.e., ways of knowing) about themselves in their world. Identities are not fixed but are rather formed first and then tailored over time through social interactions with cultural resources and activities. Children develop their sense of self by how they position themselves through their discourse in relationship to others. Through children's use of language with their peers and adults they discover the power of being accepted, rejected and how to negotiate particular membership groups. These types of dialogues help children to distinguish themselves from others.

Parents, teachers, and peers all have roles in reinforcing or challenging children's sex-typed play behaviors. Gender-fair practices and encouragement to try out different roles in play activities must be a conscious effort made by caregivers and early childhood professionals, given the considerable implications for social development and the formation of identity. Many in the field now believe that children need space to experiment with and challenge gender boundaries. From this perspective, the role of the educator becomes one of engaging children in conversations about different voices and perspectives on the world in order for them to learn there are multiple ways of being masculine and feminine. This interpretation of the role of children's play in their early learning and development places it squarely in the category of "controversial topics" to be carefully explored with children, their families, and others in the field of early childhood education. *See also* Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education; Play as Storytelling.

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Lori Grine and Laurie Katz

Play as Storytelling

Young children tell stories as naturally as they run and climb, making up dramatic scenes and playing them out with no instruction. A preschooler in the doll corner stirring a pot and setting the table has begun a story in which Mama will be a central figure. To enter the story and make it a social event, someone need only curl up in a crib and whine, "Ma-ma, Ma-ma," or put on high heels and announce, "I'm the big sister. The baby is hungry." Another child might throw on a cape and run in shouting, "A monster is coming! I'll save you!" Alternatively, he could put

on a vest and tie and say, "I'm home!," prepared to call the doctor if the baby is sick or become a hunter if the wolf is heard in the forest.

The process is familiar and seldom given the honorific of storytelling. Yet it is fair to say that this self-imposed task of thinking up character, plot and dialogue, the common occupation of children everywhere, is the essence of storytelling. Even before "Once upon a time" or "happily ever after" the stories are there, preparing the foundation for all the narratives to come, laying out the binary verities of gain and loss, safety and danger, friendship and loneliness, power and vulnerability, family and stranger, in repetitive tableaux that move from nursery to outer space to dark forest at the mere mention of a code word or character.

Children would seem to be born storytellers, knowing how to place every thought and feeling into story form. If they worry about being lost, they can become the rescuers who search: "Me and Josh losted our baby," says Angela, shoving a doll under a pile of dressups. Later, with a slight change of perspective, she moves a step up the narrative ladder. "The mommy and daddy goed hunting for their little baby," she dictates to the teacher. "It's under a mushroom someplace."

Finding the baby does not end the play or the story, and should a naughty kitten happen by, a meowing loudly, the plot continues. "Bad kitty, you waked the baby," soon to be followed by a reverse application of empathy, "Come here, little kitty, hurry up and lock the door, sister, there's a noise!"

It is play, of course, but it is also story in action, just as storytelling is play put into narrative form. Sam, age four, has never "done" stories before. That is, he has not dictated a story to a teacher for the purpose of having his classmates act it out. When I enter his Head Start classroom, he is playing alone in the doll corner, swinging a man's tie around his head in large arcs. "Fire, fire!" he shouts. Seeing me, he adds, "Old person on fire!"

"That sounds like a fireman story," I say. "If you tell me what you are playing, I'll write it down and later we'll act it out with the other children." Sam looks interested. "I'm the fire truck," he says. "Then the house is on fire. And the older person, and a cat. I put it out and I go home."

Soon Sam's story will fulfill its destiny, from play to a facsimile on paper to the theatrical version on a pretend stage, and later, to a continuation in the block area. When the children are seated around the rug, I read aloud Sam's script, the roles are handed out, and the actors perform their parts with nearly the same spontaneity as in play. After the story is acted out, everyone understands what it means to have a story to tell. The newly defined "storytellers" dictate brief scenes about lost puppies, princesses walking to the playground, Batman in flight, big brothers playing with little brothers, and a mommy who "bumped into a car crash." One might think the children have been telling and dramatizing stories all along and, in a way they have, since it is so much like play.

In the world of fantasy play and storytelling, children intuitively become the characters that represent their feelings, then work out a plot in which to encase the logical actions. Whether storyteller, story player, or story observer, it is the most compelling activity of the early years. Pretending to be someone else, they find the common threads that connect them to people and ideas, materials and motives, as they turn private thoughts into public events.

“In play,” the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky tells us, “a child is above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself.” Vygotsky might well have been describing play as storytelling. Two sisters walking along who suddenly tell each other, “Pretend we are sisters going for a walk,” have become storytellers, free to imagine new relationships and responses, parts of new dramas that create their own ceremonies. The roles are assigned and, for the duration of the plot, events will be governed by an evolving set of rules that reflect the children’s own language, logic, and lore.

Play and its core of storytelling are the primary realities in the preschool and kindergarten. You listen to my story and I’ll listen to yours and we will build communal narratives, a growing network of commonly held phrases and images, feelings and perceptions, set inside the known and unknown.

“Sh-sh! The baby is crying under a mushroom.”

“I’m the good fairy to take her to the ball.”

“When she’s older, you mean. We didn’t finish babies yet. And the dad isn’t the prince yet.”

“And the superhero is coming too, don’t forget.”

In half a dozen lines of spontaneous dialogue, these emerging storytellers examine the present and future modes of their craft; the ever-changing scenes are theirs to envision, using the characters of their own choosing. There is an urgency in the children’s desire to organize themselves into a drama, and they know it is up to them to provide the substance and structure that brings each episode to the point where a new set of details can be arranged. It is a process in which the premises are continually reviewed and the participants are emboldened to reach further into new lines of thinking. In the art of making up and acting out stories, children create their own entry into the community of learners.

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Vivian Paley

Play and the Teacher’s Role

What do teachers do while children play? Do they sit or stand or watch? Get out equipment and toys? Sweep up leaves? Take a break? Play with materials with children? Take photos? Help settle disputes? “Free play” in early childhood settings usually means lots of choices of things for children to do. Teachers also make decisions about different ways of behaving and responding to children’s play.

When children are playing, most early childhood professionals watch and listen, whether attending to one child’s play or to a small social group’s play, because they are interested in what young children are able to do, how they express themselves to each other, and how they make sense of their daily lives, dreams, and fantasies. When children are healthy and feel safe, play’s the thing children choose to do. Play is intentional: the child is agent of her own actions; she controls the context and the plot. Play is natural for children and most do it competently. With plenty of time and support for playing, children learn new play skills—they

become master players. Better than adults, children understand play and they use play to understand. Some suggest that play is the lens through which children understand the world around them. Play is also developmental in that children play differently and for different reasons at different times in their lives. During the period of early childhood, and especially when children are two, three, four, five, or six years old, play is the mode through which they learn, represent their ideas, encounter events in the natural world, and practice solving complex social and practical problems. Research makes explicit the type of learning that takes place during children's play as contrasted to what is not learned when children perceive the context as "work" (Wing, 1995).

Play as Context and Reflection of Children's Development

Before the child can read, she or he is a master of sign systems in play.

With his arms outstretched and fingers touching to fashion a circle, Dennis runs across the yard to a large cardboard box where two friends are waiting. His gesture is at first meaningless . . . but Dennis's friends can read it—they know he is a ninja turtle bringing pizza home. (Reynolds and Jones, 1997, p. 35)

Play is also where young imaginations are stimulated and talk flourishes.

Playing Dr. Jones, Aretha has a clipboard and pencil. She asks a group of girls "what is your last name?" Luanda responds "Dulce Cricket." Aretha: "Dulce Christmas?" Luanda: "My name is Ca-gu-a. Aretha: "My name is Dr. Jones." Luanda: "Hi Dr. Jones. My name is Ca-goo - I - ca." (Ibid., 60)

Close observation of children's play stimulates teachers' thinking and makes clear that there are many types and purposes of play. William Corsaro's research traces a direct link between children's play activity as contributing to and shaping the life of the community (Corsaro, 2005). Vivian Paley's writing (1986) shows, in vivid stories from her classroom, what a teacher can learn about children and their peer cultures; as well as what teachers can do to scaffold play by observing and asking questions to which she "does not know the answer." Scholars who have dedicated their research to studying children's play convey a variety of perspectives about the meanings of play. Today, most early childhood educators believe that play—and particularly fantasy play—gives children access to unlimited possibilities for action and meaning making.

Watching children at play and talking about it afterwards is not only a means to learn about children's development. It is also a strategy some teachers use to remain alert to their own roles in supporting play and interpreting the multiple possible meanings and value of play for young children. Systematic observations of preschool children's play that included a focus on what adults do while children play revealed that the art of teaching is like the art of play—there are multiple choices for action, and a teacher can know the consequences of his or her action through reflection (Jones and Reynolds, 1992). By asking questions such as "Has my intervention sustained the play?" "Has it interrupted the child's play? If so,

how?" teachers can learn to respect the child's right to play and to respond to the unlimited possibilities of children's preoccupations. Renewed attention to the importance of teachers' observations seems to reinforce previous research findings that learning through play is indirectly affected by various teaching practices. This research does not necessarily point to a direct relationship such that teacher action → child learning. Rather, the indirect effect is that teacher support of good play → child learning by engaging in good play; the child's mental construction is the result of activity and meaning making which happens through play.

Multiple roles for teachers

Effective teaching in early childhood settings cultivates children's potential by inventing child-friendly play opportunities. In support of play, adults may act in one or more roles: stage manager, mediator, player, scribe, assessor and communicator, and planner.

Stage manager is an essential role. In an orderly, well-provisioned environment with plenty of time and space for play, most children will be able to initiate and sustain their own play. Teacher-as-stage manager considers the following: Are there program practices that interfere with good play? Should play spaces be closed in the early morning or evening? Are there rules that limit where children can use certain materials? Outside, do children have opportunities for gross motor play, construction play, and also pretend play?

Mediator uses problem-solving strategies to sustain rather than interrupt play. Teacher-as-mediator does not focus on rule enforcement such as "inside voices" or "only three in the doll corner." The content of the play matters to the teacher, and he or she mediates to sustain the play, not interrupt it—"Jerry, tell Mariana why you're so upset. Mariana, tell Jerry why you're so upset. And then we can talk about how you want to solve the problem."

Not all teachers are comfortable with the role of *player*. To effectively play with children the teacher listens to children's play scripts and builds on them without taking over. Adults often coopt children's agendas by using play to teach concepts. "Is your car going down? Is it going down the freeway ramp? Is it going fast? How many cars do you have? Is your car going up again? Ebony, can you answer my question?" (Jones and Reynolds, 1992, p. 52). In contrast, when genuinely sharing children's curiosity and emotions, the *player* teacher effectively uses power to flow with their agenda for play. A teacher wanting to effectively co-play can ask herself "What is the name of this play from the children's perspectives?"

Bobby, on his hands and knees, is crawling around on the floor pretending to be a lion.

Teacher: So now you're the lion. Lion, don't eat me!

The lion growls forcefully at a child playing nurse who is delivering prescriptions, small pieces of scrap paper on which she has written her name. She says, "Stop Lion!"

The lion chases somebody into another part of the room. The teacher brings the lion back. To two girls she says, "Let's be gentle with our lion. Baby lion, please don't eat somebody."

The teacher shows the girls how to pat the lion on the head.

Lion: I'm a big lion now.

The lion crawls across the floor to a bed. There he curls up and says to the nurse:

“Get me better.”

The nurse gets her medical bag. She pulls out a stethoscope and listens to the lion's heart. She announces, “He's sick.” (Reynolds, 1993)

One teaching perspective on this child's play might be “Bobby is annoying everybody today. He needs time away from the group to calm down.” Instead, the teacher in the above scene effectively integrated Bobby's lion play script with neighboring hospital play. Perhaps she recognized that a lion's roar might soften in the company of a caring nurse.

Scribe combines naturally with *player* when the teacher scribes words children dictate but cannot yet write themselves. “Will you write “popsicles” on my shopping list?” In this way teacher-as-scribe supports children's early literacy and number learning through play. Children recognize the power of written words; a child-dictated teacher-scribed sign “Don't knock over this hospital! Sammie and Rachel” is enough of a stimulus to caution others about moving around the blocks area.

The teacher as *assessor and communicator* documents children's play through sketches, children's words, photos, and taking notes. Representing children's play in panels, storytelling, and online documentation are some of the many ways teachers can share the concepts and content of children's play. Teachers may also discover that documenting play is a powerful way to communicate play's meaning to parents.

Of all the roles for teachers in supporting and using children's play to promote further learning and development, the role of *planner* is likely most essential to supporting children's play. Observations of play generate possibilities for curriculum, and in the role of *planner* a teacher makes decisions about time, opportunities, and materials as they support or hinder children's play. Teachers can decide to make changes in the physical environment, add props, discuss possibilities for a field trip that builds on children's information, or focus on a shared interest as project work by a small group. As children assume roles and invent play scenarios with an imagined plot and story, they engage in hypothetical thinking. When children use materials, ideas, logic, symbols, and possibilities for action flexibly and spontaneously, they are playing to *get smart*, practicing initiative, divergent thinking, curiosity, problem solving, and critical thinking. “It is through play with materials and relationships, invention of classification systems, and solving problems in dialogue with others that young children develop the basic skills they will need to become effective contributors to the health of a changing world” (Jones, 2003, p 34).

Teachers who are committed to complex, sustained, and interactive dramatic play for the children in their care need opportunities to practice, as well as time for reflection, learning from one's mistakes, and new action. Workshops, college classes, and team meetings are all opportunities to grow professionally as teachers learn how to support each other's skill development in making good play happen.

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Gretchen Reynolds and Elizabeth Jones

Playgrounds

Playgrounds take many forms, including sports fields, festival grounds, carnivals, water parks, and indoor pay-for-play venues. The focus here is on playgrounds at schools, child care centers, public parks, and backyards that are intended for children's creative, spontaneous play.

No part of the world rivals Europe in early philosophical thought about the social, moral, physical, aesthetic, and pedagogical values of playgrounds as supports for children's play and early development. It was here that Plato, Martin Luther, John Amos Comenius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Locke, Johann Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, and other intellectual giants and reformers called the attention of the world to such values, and their ideas have influenced adult understandings of children's play and playgrounds to the present time. Guts Muth (1793) developed manuals and games for children's physical development in Germany during the early 1800s. These works were translated into many languages and were the basis for physical activities in schools worldwide. However, much of the early physical emphasis in Europe was on gymnastics for all ages and limited attention was given to children's free or spontaneous play. During the mid-1800s, the influence of physical development in Germany was transported to the United States through the "outdoor gymnasia," or indoor gymnastic equipment used outdoors. These first American organized outdoor playgrounds for children were complemented around the turn of the twentieth century by the introduction of "sandgartens," a concept borrowed from piles of sand in Berlin, intended initially for the play of very young children.

Child Development Center Playgrounds

During the early twentieth century, playground development in the United States followed two major paths. Playgrounds for child development centers for preschool and kindergarten children were patterned after the work of Pestalozzi, Froebel, and John Dewey, and were influenced by American child development research centers. These playgrounds featured materials and apparatus for several

forms of play—dramatic play, construction play, exercise play, and organized games. Many also featured arts and crafts and nature areas. They were intended to enhance total development—social, cognitive, physical, and emotional—not just motor development. The general overall advantage of these playgrounds over those for public parks and schools is perhaps best explained by the training in child development and play value for adult caretakers of the children. As children entered elementary school, the emphasis by educators was increasingly placed on academics and much later on high stakes testing.

School and Park Playgrounds

A second distinct but parallel playground movement was taking place during the early twentieth century, resulting from the efforts of such educational reformers as Jane Addams, Henry Curtis, Luther Gulick, Jr., and Joseph Lee. These “play organizers” were intent on rescuing city children from social and economic hazards imposed on unsupervised children and youth roaming the city streets. These people included educators, psychologists, and social workers who organized the play of children on supervised, municipal playgrounds, initially in large northeastern cities and eventually throughout the United States. Working under the auspices of the Playground Association of America (PAA), organized in 1906, social reformers sought to influence and transform the behavior and moral attitudes of the young, especially the unsupervised and the immigrant, through programs of sports and rigorous physical conditioning.

As manufacturers saw the possibilities for sales of equipment used on “outdoor gymnasias,” designers created steel jungle gyms, giant strides, see-saws, swings, and various other steel structures and outfitted public park and school playgrounds throughout much of the industrialized world. As sponsors intent on reducing maintenance installed asphalt and concrete under and around equipment, injuries multiplied and safety became a major issue. Typical early American municipal playgrounds featured about half a space for young children, with additional space for a wading pool in the center and sand bins around the sides. Separate areas were available for boys and girls, with most space reserved for boys. Additional space featured climbing, sliding, and swinging apparatus; a cinder track; handball and tennis courts; and a ball field that could be flooded in the winter for ice skating. Games fields and exercise apparatus, funded by local governments, and organized as municipal playgrounds spread rapidly. By 1905, thirty-five American cities had established supervised playgrounds supported by courses in play for training supervisors (Cavallo, 1981). By 1911, the PAA was deluged by letters requesting assistance in developing municipal playgrounds and the numbers had increased to 257 cities with 1,543 playgrounds. The official journal of the PAA, *The Playground*, is a rich source of early playground information.

Because of increasing interest in recreation, the name of the PAA was changed to Playground and Recreation Association of America (PRAA) and its journal was called *Recreation*. As interest in play declined, modifications and mergers of PRAA led to the formation of the National Recreation Association in 1930 and to the present National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 1966. The energy of the early American playground movement declined as the focus on recreation held

sway. The virtually indestructible, manufactured playground equipment remained in place during the world wars because steel was directed to the war efforts. This period was essentially devoid of any extensive energy for creating new playgrounds, perhaps in no small part due to the lengthy Great Depression, which was marked by hard work for children and limited economic resources to devote to children's play.

Following World War II, playground designers created a wide range of novel play equipment patterned after historical and fanciful devices such as animal figures, stagecoaches, and space rockets. Manufacturers reentered the field and began to produce and market these devices and the early see-saws, swings, merry-go-rounds, slides, etc.

Adventure Playgrounds

The concept of "adventure playgrounds" was created by a Danish landscape architect, C. Th. Sorensen, who was inspired by the energy and joy of children playing with scrap materials left on construction sites. His first "junk playground" or "adventure playground," was built by children assisted by adult playleaders in Emdrup, Denmark, in 1943. Adventure playgrounds spread throughout Scandinavian countries and eventually to other European cities, Japan, and the United States. These playgrounds feature trained playleaders, animal care, construction play using tools and scrap materials, contrived and organized games, gardening, and water play (Bengtsson, 1972).

Adventure playgrounds and "city farms" are popular in England, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, and, to lesser degree, in Tokyo. Presently, about 1,000 exist in Europe, with about 400 in Germany. London has more than seventy scattered across seventeen boroughs. The short-lived American Adventure Playground Association (AAPA), formed in 1976 in southern California identified sixteen adventure playgrounds in the United States in 1977. Throughout the United States, designers and creative adults integrated some elements of adventure playgrounds into traditional playgrounds, but, by 2005, following the closing of the Houston Adventure Playground Association, only three in southern California and one in Berkeley continued to operate. The adventure playground concept failed to survive because of their "junky" appearance, growing concerns about safety, lawsuits resulting from the development and implementation of national playground safety standards, and the low value held for spontaneous play by the American public. The European playground safety standards exempt adventure playgrounds, and the prevalence of court judgments in playground injury lawsuits in Europe is significantly lower than in the United States.

The Playground Standards Movement

Playground injury data and pressure from private citizens led the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to develop and publish national playground safety guidelines in 1981. The NRPA slowly turned attention back to playgrounds but focused primarily on safety. Currently, the major professional organizations concerned with children's playgrounds include the International Play Association,

the Association for Childhood Education International, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Association for the Study of Play.

The CPSC published *Handbooks for Public Playground Safety: Volumes I and II* in 1981. These volumes were revised in 1991, 1994, and 1997. In 1993, the American Society for Testing and Materials published *Standards for Public Playground Equipment* (revised in 1998 and 2001). Collectively, the CPSC and ASTM documents gradually became the “national standard of care” because of their influence in playground injury lawsuits and influenced the present “standardized” or “cookie-cutter” condition of most American playgrounds. Similarly, safety standards similar to the American standards were adopted by Australia and Canada, and the Europeans developed and adopted European playground safety standards. European adventure playgrounds were exempted from these standards.

Several American states enacted the CPSC guidelines into law and playground regulations for child care centers in all 50 states are inconsistent with national guidelines and standards. The number of playground injuries reported by the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System through CPSC has almost doubled since the CPSC guidelines were initiated, from about 117,000 during the mid-1970s to more than 200,000 during the early 2000s. The reasons for this increase are not clear but the decline of children’s fitness levels may contribute to their inability to play safely on challenging playgrounds. Collectively, playground safety standards and regulations, coupled with increasing injury litigation, emphasis on academics and high stakes testing, and competition from technology (television, computers, and video games) for recess and free play time is contributing to a rapidly growing incidence of obesity, diabetes, early signs of heart disease, and poor fitness levels of children (Frost et al., 2005). Resistance to these counters to free, spontaneous play on playgrounds is resulting in a growing call for creativity in playground design, more time for free play and recess, and extensive modification of playground standards.

Playgrounds: Present and Future

Thought and action about children’s playgrounds are in a state of flux perhaps unparalleled in history. Sponsors of playgrounds at child development centers for preschool children have managed to retain much of their broad developmental focus and provide both natural and manufactured materials intended to accommodate the broad play forms of young children.

The standardized, cookie-cutter playgrounds of most elementary schools contain a superstructure and swings designed primarily for exercise play with little or no provision for other forms of play. Community parks typically contain these same elements, complemented with games fields, swimming pools, and skate parks, focusing primarily on older children and adults.

Although restricted by safety standards, which are sometimes broadly misinterpreted to apply to natural materials, a growing number of independent playground developers are looking beyond manufactured or standardized equipment. Many of the professionals involved in developing safety standards are themselves having serious reservations about the unexpected consequences of perpetual standards revision and expansion, the power they hold in litigation, and the expansive

interpretation of their meaning by designers, manufacturers, playground sponsors, inspectors, and expert witnesses (Frost, 2005).

The Community Built Association (CBA) is an organization of those interested in involving community groups in the design, organization, and creation of their own community built public spaces. Their spaces and works go well beyond traditional playgrounds to include parks, museums, public gardens, and historic restoration. Fortunately, many CBA members work to preserve adventure play elements, involve children in creating playgrounds, and feature natural elements such as plants, water, sand and soil, gardening, tools, and hand-made structures—elements featured on traditional adventure playgrounds. These “natural playgrounds” proponents frequently circumvent the “junk” appearance, opposed by many Americans, by employing professional landscaping and a focus on aesthetics. Meanwhile, children themselves increasingly turn to indoor sedentary technology games and only dream of the days of mud holes, tree houses, kick-the-can, tree swings, and hammers and nails.

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Joe L. Frost

Play Therapy

For decades, therapists have asserted that play therapy is the most effective medium for conducting therapy with children (Freiberg, 1965; Sandler, Kennedy, and Tyson, 1980). Play therapy is defined as “a play experience that is therapeutic because it provides a secure relationship between the child and the adult, so that the child has the freedom and room to state himself in his own terms, exactly as he is at that moment in his own way and in his own time” (Axline, 1950, p. 68). A more outcome-oriented interpretation of play therapy aims for symptom resolution and adaptive stability.

Play therapy originated in the psychoanalytic tradition as a method used to delve into the unconscious mind of children. Play was first used in therapy by Sigmund Freud in the early 1900s as a technique to understand children’s unconscious fears. Free association, a technique used to explore the unconscious mind in psychoanalytic therapy with adults, was seen as an unsatisfactory tool for use with children. Psychoanalysts and child therapists began to use play in various ways in their therapeutic work with children (Dorfman, 1951). Dorfman describes Anna Freud’s use of play in therapy with children as a means to create an **attachment** between the analyst and the child, rather than as a central tool in therapy. Play allowed the child to develop a positive attachment to the therapist, thereby permitting actual therapy to occur. Some psychoanalysts saw children’s play as analogous to free association. Similarly, child therapists who focused on a client-centered approach to therapy saw play as a central component of therapy. Play

was considered a comfortable means of communication that allowed children to express themselves.

Amster (1943) identified six therapeutic uses of play: (1) play can be used for diagnostic understanding of children; (2) play can be used to establish a working relationship; (3) play can be used to restructure childrens negative functioning in daily life and defenses against anxiety; (4) play can be used to help children verbalize certain conscious material and the associated feelings; (5) play can be used to help children act out unconscious material and to relieve the accompanying tension; and (6) play can be used to develop children's play interests, which can carry over into daily life and which will enhance prognosis for future functioning.

As play became a more integral part of therapy with children, it became clear that play was the natural language of children. Because language development tends to be a slower process than cognitive development, as children engage in play during therapy, they are communicating information that they may not otherwise be able to express. Play in therapy is based on this developmental understanding that children do not understand or process information the same way as adults.

Numerous types of play therapy have emerged over the years. The major types of play therapy include Psychoanalytic, Directive, Nondirective, Release, Behavioral, Cognitive-Behavioral, Relational, Group, and Sand Tray.

Psychoanalytic Play Therapy was founded by Sigmund Freud, furthered by H. von Hug-Hellmuth, and formally structured by Melanie Klein. Play serves three primary functions in psychoanalytic play therapy sessions: (1) it allows a relationship to establish between therapist and child; (2) it allows the therapist insight into the child achieved through therapist interpretation of past experiences and memories and finally, (3) it serves as the medium for communication between child and therapist. Psychoanalytic play therapy occurs when the child is allowed to play with what he/she chooses, while the therapist interprets his or her pre-conscious and unconscious meanings out loud to the child—a technique labeled as “free association” (Klein, 1955).

Directive Play Therapy entails a series of therapist-structured situations specific to the child's current difficulties. In this type of therapy, the therapist is in charge of “setting up” the theme and content of play that will occur in the session. These structured situations are the vehicle to encourage the independent free play of the child, centered on the presenting difficulty (Hambridge, 1955).

Nondirective Play Therapy was pioneered by Virginia Axline, and allows the child to decide what to do in a session (within safe boundaries). Perhaps the most important aspect of nondirective play therapy is that the therapist must develop a warm and friendly relationship with the child. Child-centered, non-directive play therapy is based on Carl Rogers' philosophy of personality development and is based on the principle that “all individuals, including children, have the innate human capacity to strive toward growth and maturity if provided nurturing conditions” (Guerney, 2001).

Release Play Therapy is designed to allow children to act out their individual fears and concerns in a safe environment. Release therapy generates success by treating the child by utilizing his or her own methods of treating himself or herself (i.e., allowing the child to act out feelings of aggression through dolls, clay, etc.).

The role of therapist may be minimal, with little interpretation or guidance from the therapist.

Behavioral Play Therapy differs from other forms of play therapy in that the parents directly participate in the session—essentially assuming the role of “therapist.” These therapy sessions occur in a typical play therapy room, with the parent engaging in activities chosen by their child. In these play sessions, operant conditioning is the primary technique used to effect behavioral change. Parent’s administration of immediate and consistent reinforcement of appropriate behavior leads to an increasing frequency of this desired behavior. This also causes gradual extinction of the undesired behavior.

Cognitive-Behavioral Play Therapy is specifically created for preschool and school-aged children, and emphasizes the child’s involvement in treatment by addressing issues of control, mastery, and responsibility for one’s own change in behavior (Knell and Ruma, 1996). Techniques commonly employed in this type of play therapy are modeling, using puppets to demonstrate the behaviors the therapist wants the child to learn, and role playing, in which the puppets practice skills and receive feedback from the therapist.

Relationship Play Therapy was founded by Otto Rank and Carl Rogers and promotes full acceptance of the child as he or she is. The focus is on the importance and strength of the therapeutic relationship between child and therapist (Gil, 1991).

Group Play Therapy is defined by the modality of play; however, the focus of the therapy is on children interacting with each other. This therapy occurs with minimal interaction and guidance from the adult therapist and is based on the assertion children will change negative behavior to obtain acceptance from peers (Ginott, 1975).

Sand Tray Play Therapy was created by Dora Kalff. Sand tray play therapy is modeled after Jungian therapy, in that the sand tray represents the child’s psyche. The child’s placement of objects in the tray and use of symbols is interpreted as the child’s passage through healing (Gil, 1991).

In summary, there are several reasons why play therapy has emerged as an important treatment approach for working with children. As stated previously, play is the natural language of children. Using play in therapy brings the therapist into the child’s world and addresses issues in a language that is comfortable for the child. In a sense, children “play out” their issues or problems the same as adults “talk out” their problems. Developmentally, play is a means through which children are able to use concrete symbols (i.e., toys) to express their inner thoughts. Play therapy gives children the opportunity to exert some control in the therapeutic situation and a safe, supportive environment in which to express themselves.

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Portage Project

The Portage Project was developed in Portage, Wisconsin, in 1969 as a model early intervention program originally funded through the Handicap Children and Early Educational Program (HCEEP). Still a mainstay program in South Central Wisconsin, the Portage Project has grown and now offers training and replication services for other sites as well as a curriculum guide. The approach itself has also been widely disseminated as a model throughout the United States and many other countries. Since 1986 the International Portage Association has hosted conferences every two years.

Designed to deliver home-based services to children age birth to six years in rural areas with developmental delays and disabilities, the project promotes children's physical, self-help, social, academic, and language development. Based on the rationale that a parent is a child's first teacher, the Portage approach specifically teaches parents how to encourage their child's development through weekly home visits. These home visits, with their heavy parental involvement and the use of a behavioral method of instruction called precision teaching form the core of the Portage model of early intervention.

The home-based design is based on the beliefs that the home is the least restrictive environment for young children, a place that represents a wide range of natural behaviors, and the most practical arrangement for a rural model. In addition, the program's focus on training parents to support their child's development allows families to have a voice in what their children are learning with the understanding that helping parents to be advocates for their children will have long-term effects for their child's education.

Program services are delivered through weekly home visits, typically an hour and a half in length, by a teaching professional known as the home teacher. The home teacher has been trained to design individual curriculum for the child based on observations and parent input. Using the precision teaching model of behavioral analysis, the professional precisely defines targeted behaviors, breaks them down into smaller component tasks, and implements simple, highly repetitive teaching methods supported by continual assessment. To this end, each visit begins with the home teacher evaluating the child's progress on particular tasks from the week before, then developing new goals for the coming week, and teaching the parent how to engage in the prescribed activity with their child.

Three behaviors are targeted for development each week, with the goal of achieving a pattern of success that allows both child and parent to feel the benefits of continual progress. Assessment is an important part of the cycle and is based on formal, informal, curriculum-based, and ongoing observations.

In 1972, The Portage Project developed *The Portage Guide to Early Education* (revised 1976, 1996, 2003), a set of materials including a behavioral checklist and correlating activity suggestions meant to support home teachers in designing individualized curriculum. This guide is only a supplement to the program but is often confused as being the model in its entirety. During the 1970s, a wide body of research was completed documenting significant developmental gains for children who were provided Portage services. However, more recent reviews suggest that many of the studies were performed before today's more rigorous standards of evaluation were in place, and additional scientifically based research is needed to empirically demonstrate clear evidence of the program's effectiveness.

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Lindsay Barton

Poverty, Family, and Child

The multiple stressors of poverty limit children's readiness for and ability to succeed in school. In the United States, the official poverty threshold was developed for the federal government in 1964. The poverty threshold is based on a formula that tripled the cost of a basic food plan because, at that time, the average household spent one third of its income on food. Every year, the poverty threshold is updated for inflation, and in 2006 it is equivalent to \$20,000 for a family of four.

Using the official poverty definition, 18 percent of all children in the United States—13 million individuals—lived in poverty in 2003. These rates, however, have fluctuated over the past four decades, since the Census Bureau started tracking poverty rates. In 1959, 27 percent of children lived in poverty. The poverty rate declined through the 1960s to a low of 14 percent by the early 1970s. Poverty then began a steady increase, reaching a high of 22 percent by the early 1990s. From 1993 to 2001, poverty declined to 16 percent, but has since been rising.

Criticisms of the Poverty Definition

As early as 1965, experts began criticizing the poverty threshold. A 1995 report by the National Academy of Sciences recommended revising the poverty threshold because it did not include increases in child care costs, due to higher employment among mothers, medical costs, taxes, or noncash government benefits (e.g., food

stamps) (Citro and Michael, 1995). Furthermore, the poverty threshold has not kept up with increases in living standards in the United States, which means that people in poverty are worse off relative to the rest of the population than they were forty years ago. A 2000 study of families' basic budgets for major expenses, including housing, child care, health care, food, transportation, and taxes, showed that families must earn twice the poverty line to provide a "safe and decent" standard of living for their children (Bernstein et al., 2000). For this reason, many analyses of child poverty in the United States, including those developed by the National Center for Children in Poverty, not only include those children who are in officially poor families, but those in families with incomes up to 200 percent of the poverty level.

Characteristics of Low-Income Children

In 2003, 37 percent of American children (26 million) lived in low-income families—defined as families with incomes less than twice the poverty threshold. That is more than one out of every three children in the United States. Minority children, children of immigrants, young children, and children living in southern states are much more likely to live in low-income families. Fifty-eight percent of black children and 62 percent of Latino children live in low-income families, compared to 25 percent of white children. Thirty-three percent of black children, 30 percent of Latino children and 9 percent of white children live in poor families. Two thirds of children of recent immigrants live in low-income families, compared to one third of children of native-born parents, despite high levels of work and marriage among immigrant parents. Thirty-three percent of children of recent immigrants and 15 percent of children of native-born parents live in poor families. Forty-one percent of children under six are in low-income families, compared to 36 percent of older children. Twenty percent of children under six and 15 percent of older children live in poor families. Rates of poverty and low-income status also vary among the states. More than half the children in some southern and southwestern states, such as Arkansas and New Mexico, live in low-income families.

Low parental education is a primary risk factor for low income. Eighty-two percent of children, whose parents lack a high school degree, are low-income, compared to 22 percent of children whose parents have at least some college education. Forty-eight percent of children whose parents lack a high school degree and 8 percent of children whose parents have at least some college education live in poor families. Employment does not prevent low incomes among parents with low education. Among children whose parents lack a high school degree, 72 percent remain low-income even though their parents work full-time and year-round. Parents' marital status is also an important risk factor for low income. Children of single parents are more than twice as likely to live in low-income families and three times as likely to be poor compared to children of married parents.

Hardship among Children in Low-Income Families

Children in low-income families experience many hardships that are a direct result of economic insecurity. They are more likely to suffer from poor health

because they are less likely to have health insurance, less likely to go to the doctor or dentist, and less likely to have sufficient food to eat (Casey et al., 2001). Characteristics of neighborhoods contribute to children's poorer health. Children in low-income families are more likely to be exposed to environmental contaminants (Chuang et al., 1999) and to live in more violent neighborhoods (Evans), where they are disproportionately killed or injured as a result of that violence.

Decades of research suggest that poverty and low-income status is one of the greatest risk for children's poor performance in school. Children in low-income families score lower on standardized reading and math tests (Gershoff, 2003), in part, because they are less prepared to enter school. Low-income working mothers are more likely to rely on the less expensive child care provided by relatives, which is less likely to enhance school-readiness than the center-based care used by higher-income families (Cappizanno and Adams, 2004). Low-income mothers experience depression at twice the rate of mothers with higher incomes, which can lead to poor cognitive and behavioral outcomes for their children (Knitzer, 2002). Low-income children are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior, which compromises their ability to do well in school (Raver and Knitzer). Low-income families are more likely to move because of housing problems (Koball and Douglass-Hall, 2003), which can result in their children's falling behind in school because of frequent school changes (Pribesh and Downey, 1999).

Government Efforts to Address Poverty

Over the years, the federal government has tried many different approaches to combat poverty. Since the war on poverty, however, there has been no commitment to reducing poverty as a national goal, comparable, for example to the current policy in the United Kingdom. In the United States, the primary types of assistance for low-income children and families include cash benefits, such as **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**; in-kind assistance, which pay for specific supports, such as food stamps or housing subsidies; low-cost or free health insurance, such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance program; and programs aimed at poverty prevention, such as Head Start, a preschool program to prepare low-income children for kindergarten and Pell Grants, which help low-income students pay for college. Other more recent poverty prevention programs focus on the dynamics of low-income families. These programs include marriage promotion, which aims to decrease divorce and increase marriage among low-income parents; fatherhood programs, which aim to increase father involvement and child support payments of low-income fathers; and teen pregnancy prevention programs.

As of fiscal year 2000, 6 percent of the United States budget was spent on means-tested programs, and an additional 7 percent of the budget was spent on Medicaid. Not all of this money was spent on low-income children and their families. For example, Medicaid also serves people with disabilities and senior citizens in nursing homes. One of the most important antipoverty programs is the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which was created in the 1975, but greatly expanded in the early 1990s. It is the nation's largest cash program for low-income families—in 2002, it provided \$37 billion to 21 million low- and

middle-income families. It reduces the amount of tax that families with annual incomes of up to roughly \$34,000 pay. The EITC is refundable, which means that families receive cash back if the credit is more than their taxes owed. Because families can only receive the tax credit if they earn income, the EITC is believed to encourage work among low-income and poor families. It is estimated that the EITC lifts over 2 million children out of poverty each year.

In recent years, there has also been new attention to policies directed at changing family formation and dissolution decisions. For example, marriage promotion efforts, ranging from public awareness campaigns about the benefits of marriage to individual marriage counseling, are being considered. Because research shows that the vast majority of low-income, unmarried, new parents want to marry, supporters believe that these programs will help parents reach this goal. Critics assert that since the effectiveness of marriage promotion programs is untested, such efforts should not be funded by a large sum of government money.

Poverty remains one of the greatest risk factors for children's poor health, poor school performance, and future poverty. Children are at risk of living in poor and low-income families simply because of their race, their parents' education levels, or even the state in which they live. Today, even full-time parental employment does not guarantee that a child will not face the risks of growing up in a poor or low-income family. Although government programs, such as **Head Start**, have been proven to lower the risks associated with low income, they remain in jeopardy of being cut or substantially changed. Other programs, such as the EITC, which have been shown to increase work and improve the financial well-being of low-income families, are also at risk. A national, comprehensive commitment to reducing childhood poverty is currently needed in the United States.

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Jane Knitzer and Heather Koball

Pratt, Caroline (1867–1954)

Caroline Pratt, with colleagues Lucy Sprague **Mitchell** and Harriet Johnson, founded the City and Country School in New York City in 1921. Pratt's distinctive educational philosophy, derived from direct observation of children, emphasized learning through play, field trips, open-ended materials, and children's self-directed planning and problem-solving. Pratt advocated the use of wooden blocks and carpentry in programs for young children and is credited with designing the first set of unit blocks in 1943.

Born in Fayetteville, New York, "Carrie," as she was known to her family, spent her early years participating in activities typical of village life after the end of the Civil War. Intellectually precocious, she attended local schools and taught for five years in the Fayetteville Union Free School after graduation. Pratt obtained a scholarship to begin kindergarten training at Columbia University in 1892. Soon disenchanted with Friedrich **Froebel's** philosophy (which then dominated the field), Pratt decided to pursue manual training instead. During her formative years at Columbia, Pratt observed children using the Patty Smith **Hill Blocks** and, equally significant, learned to use tools and work with wood.

After traveling abroad to study Swedish *slöjd* (wood working or handwork), Pratt moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she taught for several years (1894–1901). While in Philadelphia, Pratt encountered the problems of industrialization and became involved in social reform, most notably through her friend Helen Marot, a Quaker activist and social critic. Marot became Pratt's mentor and lifelong companion; their close association endured until Marot died of a heart attack in 1940. Their Massachusetts homes—first a farmhouse in the Berkshire Mountains and later a cottage on Memensha Pond on Martha's Vineyard—provided summer havens for like-minded friends and visitors. Pratt and Marot envisioned a world where educators and reformers would work in tandem to create thinking, responsible adults whose contributions, eventually, would improve society.

Social justice suffused Pratt's work, beginning at Hartley House, a settlement program where she taught carpentry after moving to New York in 1901. By 1914, Pratt had founded the Play School, a program where, she emphasized, experiments were done *by* children not *to* children (in contrast to Thorndike's "stimulus-response" experiments at nearby Columbia).

Pratt involved Greenwich Village artists (including Jackson and Charles Pollack) in teaching children. The Play School faculty also compiled collections of artwork to document children's growth. Pratt's resident artists and her documentation methods anticipated practices that are now associated with the **Reggio Emilia** preschools.

Caroline Pratt also emphasized field trips and dramatic play. The Play School curriculum often included "absorbing trips," experiences that lent themselves to reenactment and further play to deepen understanding. Her descriptions of excursions to the marketplace, construction sites, train stations, firehouses, and other places of interest firmly established the field trip as an important component of quality educational programming.

Pratt provided simple materials for children to use as they reenacted their adventures. Paper, clay, string, wood, and other malleable materials—transformed

into dramatic play props—contrasted sharply with the highly structured pedagogical materials of the day, for example, the Froebellian gifts and Maria Montessori's didactic materials. Pratt's materials demanded use of the imagination; yielded readily to children's play ideas; and provided an infinite number and variety of opportunities for expression.

Pratt's natural, hardwood blocks were intended for use by children of all ages. Noted for their mathematical properties and precision, the blocks designed by Pratt set a standard for manufacturing that survives today. Pratt also designed the first wooden block play accessories, including Do-Withs (jointed people and animal figures) and Wedgie People (community workers and family members). *The Art of Blockbuilding* (Johnson, 1933) and *The Block Book* (Hirsch, 1974; 1984) described the value of unit blocks for children.

Pratt's *New York Times* obituary (June 7, 1954) lauded her pioneering work in education. The inscription on her gravestone in Fayetteville, New York, reads "I learn from children," the title of her best-known book.

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Ann C. Benjamin

Prekindergarten. See State Prekindergarten Programs

Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research Program (PCER)

In the United States today (NCES, 2001), more four-year-old children than ever before are attending some form of preschool program prior to entering **kindergarten**. There is a need to conduct rigorous research on the numerous curricula in use by preschool programs to provide scientific evidence on which policy makers and practitioners can base their decisions regarding curriculum selection. Given the emphasis in the **No Child Left Behind** (NCLB) legislation on "evidence-based" practices, **Head Start** and state-funded prekindergarten programs are increasingly scrutinizing research regarding the efficacy of their curricula in relation to their school readiness goals. To address this need, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the U.S. Department of Education initiated the Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER) Program, which was designed to conduct small-scale efficacy evaluations of available preschool curricula that had not been rigorously evaluated. The evaluations were conducted using a common assessment protocol and a randomized experimental design.

The PCER program began in 2002 when IES awarded grants to seven researchers to implement several widely used preschool curricula, with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International serving as their national evaluation coordinator. In

2003, IES funded an additional five researchers, with Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) Inc. serving as their national evaluation coordinator. National evaluation data were collected in fall and spring of the preschool year. Children will be followed until the end of their kindergarten year. Data collection includes direct child assessments, parent interviews, teacher report on children's social skills, teacher interview, and direct classroom observations.

The final sample included Head Start, Title 1, State pre-K, and private preschool programs serving over 2,000 children in twenty geographic locations implementing thirteen different experimental preschool curricula. Participating classrooms or schools were randomly assigned to intervention or control conditions. Baseline assessments indicate that random assignment achieved equivalence at most sites, with some treatment-control variation by site. A report from the PCER Consortium outlining results from the preschool year and follow-up assessments at the end of kindergarten is anticipated to be released in 2006. *See also* Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

Further Readings: U.S. Department of Education (2001). National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1991 and 1995.

Web Sites: PCER 2002 grantee information, <http://pcer.rti.org/> PCER 2003 grantee information, <http://www.pcer-mpr.info>.

James A. Griffin and Caroline Ebanks

Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs

Preschool is a broad term that can be used to describe any school enrolling children prior to their entry into formal schooling. However, today in the United States, "preschool" most often refers to educational programs for three- and/or four-year-old children. Often distinguished from "child care," the term *preschool* denotes a program with an educational focus, although it is well established that a high-quality child care program provides the same educational and social-emotional curricula as a high-quality preschool program (Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, 2001). Unlike a preschool program, a child care program would likely be offered for more hours per day and more days per year in order to support parents' employment, as well as promote child development. The child care program would also be more likely to enroll infants and toddlers (i.e., children younger than three years of age). Despite these distinctions, preschool remains a general term applied to a range of early childhood education programs for children in the year or two prior to **kindergarten**.

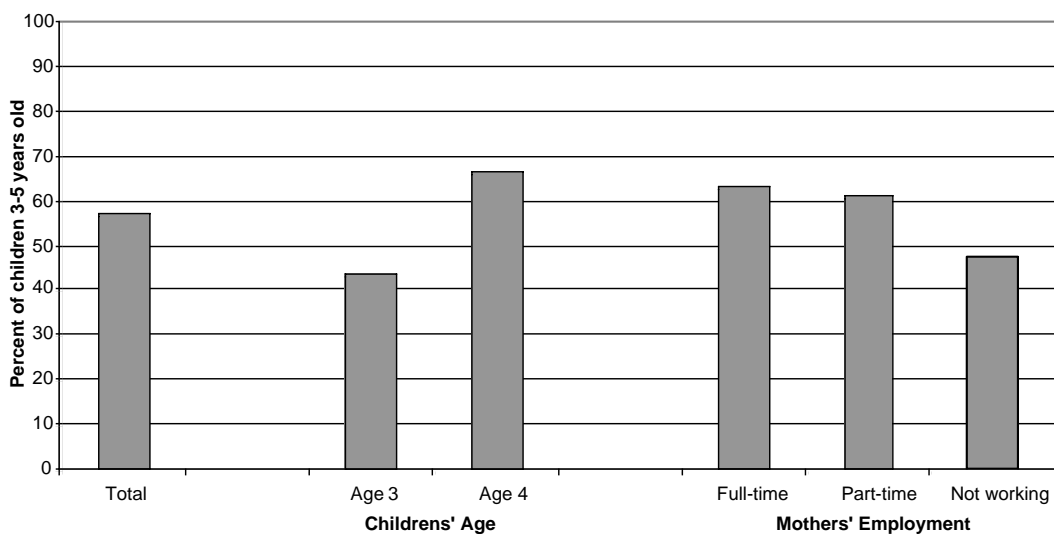
Preschool programs may be located in public or private schools, child care centers, churches, synagogues, or other community-based organizations. They may be sponsored by for-profit or nonprofit organizations, and by school districts or other local, state, or federal governments. The services may be paid for through a combination of parent fees, foundation funding, private contributions, and employers, as well as through governmental funds. Some preschool programs enroll children for the full day, five days a week for the full year, while most operate for shorter periods of time (e.g., morning only, school-year only). Although the **curriculum** and structure of programs vary, they often emphasize social-emotional

development (e.g., interpersonal skills, following directions) and early academic skills (e.g., concepts about print, counting).

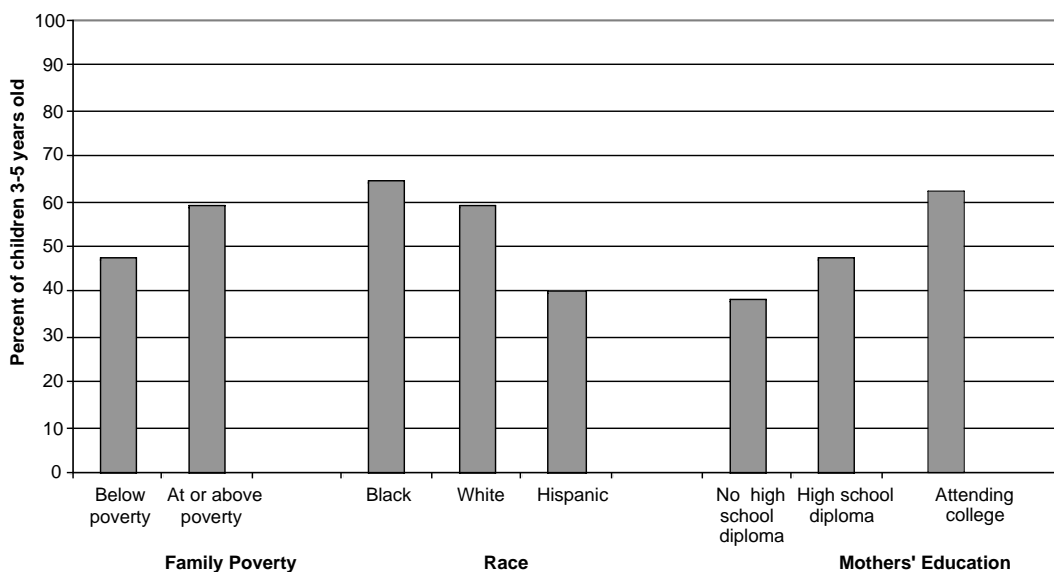
In the United States, there has been a dramatic growth in preschool enrollment over the last half-century. Prior to the 1960s, enrollment in preschool never exceeded 10 percent of the total population of children aged three and four. By 1980, more than a third of children enrolled and attended preschool; and by 2000, more than half of three- and four-year old children attended preschool (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Increased enrollment has been fueled by greater interest among parents in enrolling their children in preschool, combined with efforts by the government to promote preschool enrollment through funding at the federal, state, and local levels. Since 1965, the federal **Head Start** program has provided comprehensive preschool programs for low-income children in an effort to increase their healthy development and school **readiness**. In 2004, this \$6.7 billion program enrolled over 900,000 children (Head Start Bureau, 2005). In addition to Head Start, many states have also created state prekindergarten programs that use state funds to provide preschool in public schools and/or community-based organizations (e.g., child care centers, nonprofits). Additional governmental funding of preschool programs can also occur at the local level, where many school districts fund preschool programs in their schools using local funds—or opting to use federal (e.g., Title I) or state (e.g., funding formula) dollars to provide preschool programs. In fact, approximately 35 percent of all public elementary schools offer preschool classes—most often targeted to low-income children, children with special needs and/or four-year-old children (Wirt et al., 2004).

Data from the National Household Education Survey (NHES) highlight differences in preschool enrollment among diverse groups (as shown in the figures). Defining preschool attendance as any form of center- or school-based early care and education for three- and/or four-year-old children, NHES estimated that 56 percent of children were enrolled in 2001. However, four-year-old children were much more likely to participate (66%) than three-year-old children (43%), and children with working mothers were more likely to be in preschool (63%) than those with mothers not in the labor force (47%). Of particular concern from an educational equity perspective, children in families living in **poverty** were less likely to attend preschool (47%), as were Hispanic children (40%) and children with less-educated mothers (only 38% of children with mothers with less than high school degree were enrolled).

Since early childhood education programs such as preschool have been found to promote greater school achievement—particularly among at-risk children (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000)—these discrepancies in preschool enrollment are troubling. Because poor and minority children are both less likely to attend preschool and less likely to come to school with basic readiness skills, increasing their preschool enrollment may be an important intervention to improve their school readiness and later school achievement. In fact, rigorous estimates of the effect of providing universal preschool enrollment for three- and four-year-old children in poverty suggest that this intervention could close up to 20 percent of the Black-White school readiness gap and up to 36 percent of the Hispanic-white



Enrollment in Preschool Programs in 2001 by Children's Age and Mothers' Employment Status.
Notes: Data from 2001 U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Household Education Survey (NHES) Parent Interview; Preschool enrollment is assumed if the parent indicated that their three- or four-year-old child attended a "center-based program," which includes day care centers, Head Start, preschool, nursery school, prekindergarten, and other early childhood programs; Full-time work is defined as at least 35 hours a week.



Enrollment in Preschool Programs among Population Sub-Groups.
Notes: Data from 2001 U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Household Education Survey (NHES) Parent Interview; Preschool enrollment is assumed if the parent indicated that their three- or four-year-old child attended a "center-based program," which includes day care centers, Head Start, preschool, nursery school, prekindergarten, and other early childhood programs.

gap (Magnuson and Waldfogel, 2005). Yet these researchers also note the need to improve the educational quality of preschool programs to see these impressive impacts. Because preschool is such a broad term, applied to a wide range of programs, it should be noted that the quality of the early education services provided is much more important for children's development, learning, and health, than the program's label, whether preschool, nursery school, or child care. *See also* Academics; Curriculum, Emotional Development; Development, Emotional; Development, Social.

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Elizabeth Rigby

Professional Development

Professional development encompasses both the formal education and specialized training of early childhood professionals. Studies have established formal education and specialized training as critical elements of high-quality early childhood education.

Formal education is defined as coursework that culminates in the receipt of a diploma or degree, including a high school diploma, an associate's degree, and a bachelor's or advanced degree from a postsecondary institution, irrespective of the field in which the degree is earned. Formal education can, but does not always, include specific courses in early childhood education. The term *formal education* implies the completion of a degree rather than short-term enrollment in degree-granting programs.

Specialized training in early childhood refers to education that is focused on the skills necessary to working in the field of early childhood. Such training can take the form of academic coursework in child development or a related field within the context of a degree-granting program (e.g., early childhood **teacher education**). It may also be offered outside an educational institution (e.g., by an association or resource and referral agency) and without formal education credits given for completion. Specialized training often takes the form of in-service workshops and mentoring opportunities.

Professional Development and Early Childhood Program Quality

Both formal education and specialized training are associated with the quality of early childhood education. A substantial body of research confirms the solid connection between formal education and effective job performance. Specifically, there is a strong relationship between the number of years of education and the qualities of teachers' behaviors in the classroom, suggesting that teachers who hold at least a bachelor's degree in any field are better equipped to provide high-quality early childhood education than those with fewer years of formal education.

In addition to research on teachers' general levels of education, there is evidence that specialized training in child development or early childhood education improves teacher performance. Some research has documented higher levels of teacher sensitivity and responsiveness, as well as greater overall quality, in classrooms in which teachers have at least a **Child Development Associate (CDA)** credential. A CDA is earned under the auspices of an organization or agency with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation (such as a postsecondary institution or resource and referral agency). It is awarded to individuals who have had training and experience in the field of early childhood education and have successfully completed the CDA assessment.

There is debate about whether specialized training on its own—without the benefit of a bachelor's or advanced degree—ensures high-quality early childhood education or better outcomes for children in early childhood settings. Some researchers argue that the nature of the specialized training is critical and that teacher effectiveness results only from involvement in formal programs of education in child development or a related field. For example, researchers who have observed teachers in child care centers with different levels and types of training and formal education (including, for example, a high school diploma with no specialized training, a CDA credential, and a bachelor's or higher degree in child development or a related field) have found that only teachers with a bachelor's degree or beyond are associated with classrooms regarded as high-quality. Although teachers with associate's degrees and CDA certificates prove to be more effective than those with only some specialized training in postsecondary institutions or a high school degree with some in-service training, they do not provide the "good-to-excellent" level of quality associated with children's future school success.

Family child care providers are less likely to have a bachelor's degree than center-based teachers. Nonetheless, the existing (but limited) studies of family child care homes reveal patterns of findings similar to those of centers. Family child care providers who are better educated and have received higher levels of specialized training create richer learning environments and provide warmer and more sensitive caregiving than providers with less education and training.

It should be noted that some very recent research on prekindergarten programs finds that teacher education and training are only modest predictors of observed classroom quality. This is in contrast with research on child care programs, for which such associations are greater in magnitude. These findings suggest that the importance of professional development to classroom quality might vary across types of early childhood settings.

Nonetheless, early childhood teachers and providers who possess *both* higher levels of formal education and specialized training in child development bring the most to early childhood education. They are generally more skilled at helping young children develop and achieve their potential. Their interactions with the children in their care are sensitive, warm, and intellectually stimulating—essential components of high-quality care. In particular, children whose teachers are well educated and specially trained have better prereading and premath skills, better social skills, and larger vocabularies. This link between teacher formal education and specialized training and children's school readiness is especially pertinent to children from low-income families, who are at high risk of academic failure if they enter elementary school without the social and cognitive skills necessary for adaptation to school.

The benefits to children of having well-qualified teachers in early childhood settings persist over time. For example, research suggests that the closeness of the early childhood teacher-child relationship is related to children's thinking skills, math skills, social skills, and language ability into the elementary school years. Children whose early childhood teachers have high levels of formal education and training are also more likely to cooperate with elementary-school teachers and, according to teachers and parents, have fewer behavior problems. Furthermore, the positive effects of high-quality early childhood teachers on low-income children can persist into young adulthood. In the care of well-trained early childhood teachers, children are more likely to grow up to be healthier and better adjusted, emotionally and socially. They are also less likely to need expensive remedial services, such as special education, and enter correction or welfare systems.

Professional Development Requirements in the United States

Many occupations, including architecture, electrical engineering, social work, and nursing, require individual credentials (e.g., a certificate or diploma) as a means of ensuring high-quality service. In most educational and human services, the conventional standard for professional preparation for practice is a bachelor's degree. Kindergarten and primary school teachers, for example, must have a bachelor's degree and earn **teacher certification** before they can teach. In its recent report on the care and education of preschoolers, the National Research Council recommended that each group of children in an early childhood program be assigned a teacher who has a college degree and specialized education related to early childhood (National Research Council, 2000).

While the early childhood field provides a mechanism for licensing facilities, it does not, as a profession, require credentials for the individuals who work with children. Instead, each state sets its own minimum qualifications, resulting in great variation in teacher preparation across states and program types (e.g., prekindergarten, child care). Twenty states and the District of Columbia require prekindergarten teachers to have a bachelor's degree. By comparison, only one state—Rhode Island—requires teachers in child care centers to have a bachelor's degree. In many states the maximum education requirement for teachers in child care centers is some early childhood coursework in a postsecondary institution. Thirty states require child care teachers to have no more than a high school

diploma in order to teach. Family child care is another story. Only two states require family child care providers to have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Most states require providers to have some annual in-service training.

Professional Development Infrastructure

The professional development of early childhood teachers is dependent upon the accessibility and efficacy of the professional development system in place. An effective system of professional development requires an infrastructure. In the United States, the widespread and long-term professional development of early childhood teachers has led to the conceptualization of a *career lattice*, which depicts the knowledge, performances, and dispositions associated with the early childhood profession's various roles, levels, and settings. The career lattice fosters progression within the field by providing a logical sequence of roles and preparation that individuals can achieve. The lattice framework captures the diversity of roles and settings within the early childhood profession (represented by vertical strands) as well as steps toward greater preparation, tied to increased responsibility and compensation (represented by horizontal levels) within each role/setting. The lattice also allows for movement across roles (represented by diagonals). Each strand of the lattice is interconnected and all strands are part of the larger early childhood profession. By offering opportunities for advancement while early childhood professionals continue to work with children, career lattices serve as both support and advocacy for higher-quality services for children (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1993).

Also critical to the professional development infrastructure are a *core body of knowledge* (specific knowledge) and a *set of core competencies* (observable skills) specific to the field of early childhood education and required to be an effective early childhood professional. Together, the body of knowledge and competencies distinguish early childhood professionals from other professionals. Finally, *articulation agreements* among institutions of higher education constitute another important component of the infrastructure. These allow early childhood professionals to transfer credit among schools, which makes it easier to earn a degree or pursue specialized education. Without articulation, teachers may have difficulty receiving credit for courses they have taken, which, in turn, makes it hard to earn a degree and advance in the field. See also Child Care, Families.

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Amy E. Lowenstein

Professional Ethics

A commitment to ethical behavior is an essential component of every profession. Each profession (occupation with a commitment to a significant social value) has a unique conception of its ethical obligations based on the nature of its contribution to society, its history, and its values. Codes of ethics are part of the identity of the profession and provide guidelines for the ethical conduct of its practitioners. As an occupation that makes the significant contribution of educating and caring for the young in our society, the early care and education field is striving to become recognized as a profession. Part of this process is attention to professional ethics. Ethics is a particularly significant endeavor for the early care and education field because the children who are served are young and therefore vulnerable. The development of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct** was an important step in raising awareness of the moral and ethical dimensions of the early childhood educator's work and has provided a common framework for thinking about ethics and addressing ethical issues that arise in the work of early childhood educators.

Morality and Ethics

Morality refers to beliefs about right and wrong that guide an individual's behavior. Ethics addresses a range of values relating to morality and what is considered to be right and proper. Ethics can be defined as the explicit and critical reflection on moral beliefs. It is the study of right and wrong, duty and obligation. "Doing ethics" means making choices between values and examining the moral dimensions of relationships. Ethics builds on an individual's personal values and morality.

Professional ethics involves reflection on moral beliefs and practices, carried on collectively and systematically by the members of a profession. The goal of a profession is to meet the needs of clients and to use knowledge for the good of society. The responsibilities of a profession are set forth in a code of ethics—one of the hallmarks of a profession. A code assures the society that practitioners

who perform a particular role will provide their services in accordance with high standards and acceptable moral conduct.

Codes of Ethics

A code of ethics reflects the shared understandings and combined wisdom of a group of professionals. A code acknowledges the obligations that individual practitioners share in meeting the profession's responsibility. A code, which lays out the profession's firmly held beliefs, can be a unifying force in a profession, providing a vision of what good professionals should be like and how they should behave. It also gives a framework for ethical decision making, offering guidance to practitioners in making choices that serve the best interests of their clients. It can also support a person who takes a risky but courageous stand and can provide the justification for a difficult decision.

A code of ethics helps people who work in a field to address issues that cannot be settled by research or by law and it supports them in doing what is right, not what is easiest, most comfortable, or will make them most popular. A code of ethics is not a legal or regulatory document. It differs from laws, policies, and regulations in that the code's focus is on individuals, not agencies, programs, or organizations. It guides but does not mandate professionals' efforts to address the most difficult situations of the workplace. Codes of professional ethics vary. Some are general and inspirational, while others are designed to provide specific guidance to practitioners in addressing ethical dilemmas that they encounter in their work.

The Naeyc Code of Ethical Conduct

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has been involved in work on professional ethics since the 1970s. The first publication that focused on professional ethics, *Ethical Behavior in Early Childhood Education*, was authored by Lilian Katz and Evangeline Ward (1978/1991). In this work the authors describe several aspects of working with young children with significant ethical implications. The first and most compelling reason for early childhood educators to be concerned with ethics is the vulnerability of young children and the resulting power and status of the adults who work with them. Another reason is that early childhood educators serve many client groups (children, families, employing agencies, and the community) and therefore must be able to prioritize the interests, needs, and demands of one group over another. A third reason has to do with the ambiguity of the role of the early childhood educator who, in the course of the day, may assume many different roles, including caregiving functions that are much like those of a parent. It is to be expected that tensions sometimes develop between teachers/caregivers and children's parents when they have different views about how these children should be raised.

The Katz and Ward book, first released in 1978, served to document the field's need for a code of ethics to assist early childhood educators in fulfilling their many responsibilities and creating and maintaining multiple complex relationships while working effectively with young children and their families.

In 1984, NAEYC Governing Board created an Ethics Commission, chaired by Stephanie Feeney, which embarked on the task of exploring and clarifying the profession's understanding of its ethical responsibilities. The first edition of the code now in use was developed through a process led by Feeney and Kenneth Kipnis, a philosopher who served as a consultant during the development of the code. They began by publishing a survey in NAEYC's journal, *Young Children*. Results from that survey demonstrated that members agreed that the development of a code was an important priority. This began a two-year-long process during which workshops were held to reach consensus on the field's core values; vignettes were published in the journal, asking readers to send responses describing that they believed "the good early childhood educator" should do when faced with a variety of ethical dilemmas.

Working with the information gleaned from the membership through these efforts, Feeney and Kipnis presented the first draft of the code to the NAEYC Board in November 1988. After making the revisions recommended by the Board, the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct was approved in July 1989 and published in *Young Children* that November. The Code has been revised three times since its original adoption, in 1992, 1997, and 2005.

The NAEYC Code includes a Preamble; a list of core values; and sections exploring ethical responsibilities to children, families, community, and society. It also includes a statement of commitment—a personal expression of agreement with the values and responsibilities shared by all early childhood educators.

The core values articulated in the Code are firmly grounded in the history and literature of the field. They reflect members' central beliefs, their commitment to society, and a common purpose embraced by early childhood field. These core values are the foundation that makes it possible for early childhood educators to move from personal values and beliefs to a shared understanding of the professional values held by everyone in the field.

Each of the Code's four sections includes a brief introduction, a list of *Ideals* and a list of *Principles*. Ideals point the individual in the direction of desirable and exemplary professional behavior. The Principles identify practices that are required, those that are permitted, and those that are prohibited. Principles are the basis for distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable behavior. Typically the violation of such a rule involves betrayal of some core value of the profession.

In 2004, a Supplement for Early Childhood Adult Educators was released jointly by NAEYC, the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE), and the American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS). It addresses the unique needs of those who work with adult learners who are either working in, or preparing to work in, early childhood education.

The NAEYC Code Is a Living Document

Because NAEYC is a membership organization open to all who are interested in young children and early care and education, its code is not enforced as are those of professional groups like doctors and lawyers who have strong organizations charged with regulating the profession. But the NAEYC ethical guidelines have had

a strong impact on practice in early childhood education. This influence can be attributed to NAEYC's commitment to making the Code widely available, building it into the association's activities and making it visible to members through regular publications and conference presentations.

The NAEYC Code of Ethics is available in the form of inexpensive brochures published by NAEYC in English and Spanish. And it is included in most basic texts in early childhood education. It can also be found on the NAEYC Web site (www.naeyc.org) by following links to Resources → Position Statements → Improving early childhood education and professionalism. NAEYC has invested in educating its members about the Code and in helping members learn how to apply it. They have published two books devoted to ethics: a basic text *Ethics and the Early Childhood Educator* (Feeney and Freeman, 1999) and *Teaching the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct: Activity Sourcebook* (Feeney, Freeman, and Moravcik, 2000), a book of activities and resources helpful to those teaching about the code and its application. These resources have been widely distributed and have played an influential role enhancing practitioners' professionalism.

The Code does not provide answers for all the thorny dilemmas of practice. The supporting and interpretive literature mentioned earlier does not play that role either—they offer neither cookbook formulas for finding one best solution, nor an exhaustive list of dilemmas and their “best” solutions. What these resources do offer, however, are tools to help early childhood educators approach difficult situations methodically and systematically, and to reach resolutions that are fair and defensible. It assures early childhood professionals that they are not alone when they take the moral high ground described by their Code of Ethics.

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Stephanie Feeney and Nancy K. Freeman

Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers (PITC)

The Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers (PITC) is the nation's major provider of infant/toddler caregiver training. WestEd, one of the nation's ten regional

Educational Research and Development Laboratories, launched PITC in 1986, working with the California Department of Education (CDE/CDD). PITC activities include creating and distributing video, print, and Web site materials, and providing institutes, graduate events, conferences, community outreach events, and locally based training of caregivers. PITC video and print materials are the most widely disseminated infant/toddler caregiver training materials in the United States. Between 1996 and 2003, PITC played a major role in providing training and technical assistance to the 700 **Early Head Start** and Migrant Head Start programs serving infants and toddlers. PITC has presented Trainer Institutes, along with graduate conferences and satellite trainings, in sixteen states. The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers training system has reached more than 100,000 caregivers nationwide.

The heart of the PITC philosophy is the development of warm, nurturing relationships between infants, their families, and their caregivers, and care that is individualized, culturally responsive, and respectful of the child's cues and natural desire to learn. PITC recommends six program policies that support relationships and early learning:

- The assignment of a *primary caregiver* to each child and family
- *Continuity* of caregiver assignments and groups over time
- The creation of *small groups* of children and caregivers
- Responsiveness to *individual needs*, abilities and schedules
- *Inclusion* of children with disabilities and other special needs,
- *Cultural responsiveness* through dialog and collaboration with families.

These policies are intended to promote the development of relationships and social skills as well as positive identity formation, along with cognitive, language, and physical skills. The physical child care environment is another critical element in the care of infants and toddlers. PITC recommends environments that are safe, healthy, comfortable, and convenient for both children and adults, encourage movement, allow for flexibility, are scaled to the children's size, and offer a variety of choices. An integral part of the Program's training philosophy is the concept of "Creating a Community of Learners," which focuses attention on the variety of learning styles, knowledge and experiences of adult learners, and emphasizes the value of supported, cooperative learning. An evaluation of PITC training has shown a positive impact on programs after completing the training. After attendance at PITC institutes, participants may become certified Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers trainers in that module through the successful completion of a certification paper describing their training plans for each of the module's topics.

The PITC materials and trainings are organized into four modules.

- **Module I: Social-emotional Growth and Socialization** includes infant temperament, stages of emotional development, responsive caregiving, guidance, and discipline.
- **Module II: Group Care** includes caregiving routines, environments, group organization, and respectful care.
- **Module III: Learning and Development** includes brain development, cognitive learning, language and communication, special needs, and the role of culture in learning and development.

- **Module IV: Culture, Family, and Providers** includes culture and identity formation, parent-caregiver relations, and providing culturally sensitive care.
See also Infant Care; Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale.

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Web Site: PITC Web Site, www.pitc.org

J. Ronald Lally

Progressive Education

Progressive education is a term that refers to multiple and sometimes conflicting educational theories and practices. The term does not necessarily refer to one entity, and its origins are associated with many historical figures in the fields of education, child development, and philosophy. Although progressive education has manifested itself in a wide variety of teaching policies and practices, proponents of progressive education share a common desire to create schools that expand the concept of education beyond that of traditional schooling.

Progressive education was prominent in the early 1900s and began as an effort to use schools to improve each individual's life. This expanded the school's role to include addressing each child's health, improving the quality of family and community life, applying new pedagogical principles developed from the **child study movement**, and adapting instruction to accommodate the increasingly diverse populations of children attending public school. Progressive reformers believed that the schools should prepare citizens to be active participants in a democratic society.

John Dewey is often considered the founder of progressive education. Dewey himself, however, called Francis W. Parker the father of the movement. Progressive education also draws on ideas from Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi, and Fredrich Froebel, dating back to the late eighteenth century. Rousseau emphasized experiential learning, one of the hallmarks of progressive education. Pestalozzi was influenced by Rousseau's writings, and furthered the ideas of child-centered pedagogy and social justice through education. Froebel opened his own school that emphasized active cooperative learning after being inspired by Pestalozzi's ideas while working at a Pestalozzian school. Later, Parker and Dewey each integrated the concept that children learn best through actual performance and experimentation into their own work in the Quincy schools and the laboratory school at the University of Chicago, respectively.

Although the progressive education movement was not necessarily a cohesive effort toward a specific model of education, there are many philosophical foundations that pervade most progressive schools historically and in the present. Progressive educators attempt to educate the "whole child"—meaning children as intellectual, social, emotional, and physical beings—and view each child as an individual with a unique learning profile and unique needs. The progressive educator promotes adapting teaching methods to each individual child instead of forcing education on the child using the accepted methods of the time.

Progressive educators propose that education must differ for each student dependent on his individual needs, strengths, and weaknesses.

Progressive education claims to be child centered because it focuses on the needs of the individual child instead of the needs of the institution or the school. It rejects rote learning in favor of involving children in active learning by applying ideas to real-life situations. In this way, progressive education attempts to prepare children more fully to participate in society outside the school by placing academic skills in the context of the real world. In addition, progressive education promotes the value of **play**. In this sense, the early progressive education movement had a profound influence on today's preschools, where play is often the major vehicle used for teaching and learning. This aspect of progressive education draws heavily on Froebel's work, which led to the **kindergarten** movement in the United States. Play-based learning is closely connected to the idea of **emergent curriculum**, another aspect of progressive education, and involves the practice of creating curriculum based on children's interests. Close observation of children's play often reveals their interests and can allow the teacher to build curriculum that incorporates these topics that are important to her students. The progressive philosophy or principle is that children will be more invested in learning if they are interested in the topic and therefore motivated to participate in the learning experience. Progressive education also emphasizes self-discipline and does not use punishment as a way to encourage learning. The child is encouraged and allowed to progress at his own pace and teachers try to avoid competition.

Prior to World War I, the public was frustrated with classic curriculum, and was open to new ideas about schooling. Thus, Dewey and other progressive educators found an audience for their rejection of traditional rote learning in favor of a curriculum based on individual interests to prepare students for participation in a democratic society. Parker embraced an informal school environment as opposed to the traditional formal teaching techniques and Dewey later expanded upon Parker's ideas by writing about his belief that all areas of a child's life should be integrated into the school. Dewey was most influential after World War I when his philosophy that the school should be a microcosm of society coincided with public demand that education become more relevant to social needs.

Progressive education was most prominent from 1919 to 1955 when the Progressive Education Association was actively promoting its ideals. Stanwood Cobb founded the organization, and John Dewey served as honorary president from 1926 until his death in 1952. In 1924, the association began to publish *Progressive Education*, a quarterly publication that discussed the pedagogical practices of progressive schools. However, the association struggled to agree on a consistent philosophy of progressive education and was unable to create alternatives to the traditional curriculum that it criticized. Thus, in 1955, as progressive education became less popular, the association was dissolved.

Dewey in particular brought the ideas of progressive education to the world by writing many landmark books about it, including *The School and Society* (1899) and *Democracy and Education* (1916). However, some educators misinterpreted Dewey's writing and abandoned discipline completely in the name of progressive education. Some took Dewey's ideas about pupil freedom to such an extreme as

to completely overlook the necessity of purpose, continuity, and structure in the learning process. Although Dewey himself criticized this practice, schools where pupils had complete control over their learning experience came to represent progressive education to numerous educators and laymen. This distorted public perception of progressive education led to rejection of progressive education by many who already opposed educational reform. However, the intent of Dewey's ideas about self-discipline were that children would learn more effectively through guided expression as opposed to authoritarian teaching.

Early progressive schools were characterized by unusually creative teachers and highly motivated students, which resulted in very effective and exemplary schools. However, owing to the lack of a standardized method, progressive education practices did not produce positive results when educators attempted to generalize progressive education into schools with typical teachers and students. In addition, the progressive education movement lost support in the 1950s owing to claims that it was tied to liberal and radical politics. In this era of cold war anxiety, anticommunism, and cultural conservatism, declarations that progressive education was un-American caused the public to reject it in favor of a return to traditional curriculum that focused on rigorous academic studies. In the mid-1950s the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union took over American political consciousness, causing many Americans to embrace stringent standards for education. Today, George W. Bush's **No Child Left Behind Act** continues to stress traditional methods of education as measured by standardized tests that will hold educators accountable for the education of American children.

Although progressive education is not as widely known today as it was in the early 1900s, many aspects of its philosophy have been integrated into a variety of educational settings, most notably contemporary preschools. Open classrooms, cooperative learning, multiage approaches, whole language, experiential education, and many forms of alternative schools all have philosophical roots in progressive education. In addition, many private and independent schools still exist that associate themselves with progressive education. The progressive education movement raised aesthetic standards for schools, increased the variety of pedagogical methods available to educators, and increased vocational and manual training opportunities. Although the demise of the Progressive Education Association in 1955 marked the end of the prominence of progressive education, its legacy lives on as educators continue to integrate aspects of this philosophy into modern schools.

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The Project Approach

The Project Approach refers to that portion of the curriculum in which the children are encouraged to initiate, plan, and conduct in-depth investigations of objects and events from their own experience and environment. These investigations, usually referred to as projects, provide contexts for children to examine in depth and detail phenomena which are thought to be worthy of their fuller and deeper knowledge and understanding. In the United States, the project approach is most often found in preschool through the elementary grades.

The inclusion of projects in the curriculum for elementary school children was first reported in the United States early in the last century as applied at University of Chicago Laboratory School. Shortly thereafter this approach was promoted as a method of teaching in elementary schools by William Heard Kilpatrick (1922) under the title “The Project Method.”

This method has a long history in the United Kingdom also, dating back to World War II until the 1980s, when it became a major component of preschool and primary education. Sometimes referred to as “the integrated day” (Katz and Chard, 1989), current interpretations of the project approach include many features associated with *progettazione*, one of many impressive components of the world-renowned preprimary schools of the small northern Italian city of **Reggio Emilia**. In addition to publications focused on this pedagogical approach, several Web sites with information, illustrations, and guidelines about implementation of the project approach are now available (cf. www.project-approach.com).

Current interpretations of the *Project Approach* suggest that projects are an important element of an early childhood curriculum that, when well implemented, are complementary to other elements of the larger curriculum. In project work, children frequently employ their growing academic skills purposefully in the service of their intellectual pursuits; it is assumed that the dispositions to master and use basic academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, graphing) are strengthened by their obvious usefulness in the eyes of the children themselves. Increasing awareness of the experience and practices of preprimary educators in Reggio Emilia has deepened their appreciation of how “graphic languages” such as observational drawing can enrich their project work. Reggio Emilia has also deepened an appreciation of the value of incorporating the careful **documentation** of the children’s experiences to enhance all aspects of their learning, as well as to facilitate the involvement and appreciation of their parents.

Features of the Project Approach

Current interpretations of the project approach are more carefully structured than earlier implementations. Projects, defined as in-depth investigations of particular topics, are usually undertaken by a whole class, but in which small groups, or occasionally individuals, focus on subtopics related to the main one. The central feature of project work is that it involves children participating (with the adults) in the selection of the topic to be investigated, the formulation of the research questions, the gathering of the data they decide they will need in order to answer their questions, and in various ways summarizing and presenting their findings.

The Phases of Project Work

Katz and Chard (1995) and Helm and Katz (2001) recommend that projects be undertaken in roughly three sequential phases. This strategy helps young children gain a sense of the sequence and narrative of the experiences included in conducting investigations; it also enables the children to identify readily with the purposes of the work of each phase and to enjoy a sense of the progression as well as conclusion of their efforts.

Phase I—Getting Started: In phase I, a topic for the investigation is typically selected by the teacher in close consultation with the children. On the basis of discussions about possible phenomena to investigate, the teacher can assess the likelihood that the topic will be of interest to a sufficiently large proportion of the children in the class. During these early discussions, children are invited to share their own experiences, opinions, and current knowledge related to the topic.

Children are also encouraged to represent their own experiences related to the topic through drawings, paintings, dictating or writing stories, reporting their memories to each other. Throughout this period the teacher continues to assess which aspects of the topic are likely to be of greatest interest to most of the children, as well as which children might serve as leaders or resources because of their special experiences. The teacher also makes note of which aspects of the topic require further clarification and deeper knowledge and how the investigation can support this learning.

At the close of Phase I, the teacher helps the children formulate clearly their research questions and predict the answers; and share the basis for their predictions. The teacher also provokes the children to challenge each other's predictions and to think of ways to test them. Phase I concludes with a preliminary set of research questions, to be added to throughout the project. This phase may last several days, or a week or two, depending on how often the children are together, the scope of the topic, and their interests.

Phase II—Gathering the Data: During this period the main activity is conducting the investigation, doing the fieldwork involved in gathering data that will answer the previously generated questions. Depending on the ages of the children, and the nature of the topic, Phase II will include first-hand, direct exploration of the objects and environments related to the topic. During visits to relevant fields children might draw what they observe, asking questions of relevant on-site experts. Phase II also usually includes inviting experts into the classroom to answer prepared questions and to show and explain relevant items.

Many projects also include children's development of surveys and/or questionnaires related to the topic, and interviewing people who have something to say about the topic. Toward the end of this phase the children discuss with the teacher various ways of presenting the results of their research to peers, families, and others.

Many good projects have been conducted without field site visits and use data or pertinent objects collected and brought to classrooms from home. For example, several groups of preschoolers and kindergartners have participated in

studies of balls that were part of home collections (sometimes as many as thirty different kinds). The topic “Water in Our Houses” has also involved kindergarten and primary grade children in different communities in bringing complex data from home to their classes to examine, analyze, and summarize together.

Phase III—Bringing the Investigation to a Conclusion: During the final period, the work of the investigation is brought to a close. The teacher involves the children in examining the findings as they correspond to their initial questions and predictions. During this phase a large part of the children’s effort is devoted to deciding how to represent the story of their investigation during the project. Projects often conclude with an “open house” event to which parents and others in the community and in the school are invited to examine the children’s work. These events often involve children in planning formal presentations, considering what their visitors will find most interesting about their work, and making decisions about what to include in the documentation of the project so as to show clearly what has been learned and accomplished. Many projects also produce class books, and photo albums that capture the children’s experiences so that the children themselves can revisit them, and can share them with others who were not part of the actual experiences.

The Project Approach and Children’s Development and Learning

Observing young children engaged in good project work makes it clear that development and learning can be supported by the activities and processes involved, as long as the topic under investigation is worthy of the children’s energy and effort. As the teacher engages the children in discussions related to the topic, they have ample experience of expressing their views, listening to others’ views, arguing, explaining, and engaging in the sort of **classroom discourse** that supports children’s language development.

In conducting an investigation, children are active rather than passive learners, working in contexts in which they demonstrate their intellectual dispositions to theorize, analyze, hypothesize, make predictions, and to argue. This “active” versus “passive” role in the classroom is thought to be especially important in the development and learning of boys, who are more likely than girls to be expected to be assertive and active rather than passive in many cultures. In addition, children’s emerging academic skills are purposefully employed during project work. The children readily take initiative and take responsibility for seeking answers to their questions by a variety of information-seeking strategies, for example, conducting interviews, surveys, making observational drawings and sketches that will serve as a basis for discussion, planning, and arguments. In other words, the purposes of these investigations and the usefulness of basic **literacy** and numeracy and other skills are clear to the children themselves.

Project Approach supports a number of dispositions identified as central to children’s learning. Because investigations involve children in extended effort over time, rather than brief one-shot amusing activities, they are supportive of the disposition called *interest*, that is, the capacity to lose oneself in something outside of oneself. The Project Approach also emphasizes providing contexts that

strengthen and support children's *intellectual* dispositions, in contrast to more formal instructional contexts that may damage important intellectual dispositions as a result of excessive academic pressure (see Golbeck, 2001; Marcon, 2003). See also *Academics; Development, Language*.

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Lilian G. Katz

Project Zero (PZ)

Project Zero (PZ) is a research organization housed at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. PZ's mission is to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity across the arts and other disciplines. At any given time, approximately ten to twenty separate investigations are underway in schools, museums, and other cultural and educational institutions in the United States and around the world. A primary focus of the research is creating communities of reflective learners and promoting critical and creative thinking for children, adults, and organizations.

PZ was founded in 1967 by the philosopher Nelson Goodman to study and improve education in the arts. Goodman believed that learning in the arts is a serious cognitive activity and should be studied as such, but that "zero" had been firmly established about the field (hence the organization's name). In 1972, Howard Gardner and David Perkins became codirectors, posts they held into the 1990s. In 2000, Steve Seidel assumed the directorship of the organization.

Three lines of PZ research are particularly noteworthy in the field of early childhood education. The Early Symbolization and Transition to Literacy Project (1976-1989) was a group of closely related studies that looked at young children's representational capacities. PZ researchers documented the maturation of young children's linguistic, artistic, and musical capacities in order to develop a model of early symbolic development in different areas. Researchers also investigated the onset and growth of symbol use in school-age children.

Based on Howard Gardner's theory of **multiple intelligences** and David Feldman's theory of development in nonuniversal domains, Project Spectrum (1984-1993) constructed an alternative approach to assessment and curriculum development for the preschool and early elementary years. Positing that each child has a unique profile (spectrum) of intelligences, and that these intelligences can be enhanced by educational opportunities, researchers used classroom observations to develop methods of assessing and promoting children's linguistic, mathematical, musical, artistic, social, scientific and kinesthetic knowledge.

The aim of the Making Learning Visible (MLV) Project (1997–present) is to understand, document, and promote learning groups in schools. MLV researchers investigate the power of the group as a learning environment and **documentation** as a way for students, teachers, and other interested adults to see how and what children are learning. Initially a collaboration with educators from the municipal preschools of **Reggio Emilia**, Italy, the project has also worked with teachers in the United States from preschool through graduate school to explore individual and group learning in a range of classroom settings.

Research directions at Project Zero are influenced by the interests of the principal investigators and priorities of funding organizations. The primary source of financial support comes from private foundations and individual philanthropists. Research findings are disseminated through publications, Web sites, and a variety of professional development formats such as an annual institute, seminars, and online courses.

Further Readings: Project Zero (2005). Available online at <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/index.htm>; Making Learning Visible (2005). Available online at <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/mlv/index.cfm>.

Ben Mardell and Mara Krechevsky

Psychosocial Theory

Noted child psychoanalyst Erik H. **Erikson** is often referred to as the father of psychosocial development. He was closely associated with psychoanalysts Sigmund **Freud** and his daughter, Anna **Freud**, during his stay in Vienna from 1927 to 1933, a period described as one of Freud's fame. Erikson, more than anyone else, made the most significant advances in the field of psychoanalytical theory. He viewed the psychoanalytic situation as a modern Western approach to humankind's attempts at introspection, beginning at first as a psychotherapeutic method and leading later to a broader psychological theory. Erikson's best-known work is *Childhood and Society* published in 1950.

Earlier, Freud had postulated that personality development was influenced by a sequence of stages in which the child's libido, or sexual energy, was centered on particular body zones, starting from the oral and moving through the anal, phallic, and genital regions of the body. Freud's approach to psychoanalysis was thus defined by a theory of psychosexual development. Erikson worked to broaden Freud's perspective after his study of the Sioux Indian children showed him the deep influence that social and historical change had on the human mind. Erikson himself had been greatly impressed by the work of anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead.

In his book, *Childhood and Society*, he made note of the fact that even anthropologists living for years among aboriginal tribes had been inattentive to the quality of child care within the tribes, and had failed to see that these tribes trained their children in some systematic way. In the same book, Erikson also presented an in-depth discussion on the Freudian concepts of the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. In doing so, Erikson made clear the continuity between the main ideas from his earlier training and his work later in life. These themes are

integrated in the section in the book in which he formulated his discussion on the psychosocial nature of development, taking into account an understanding of general encounters between the child and the social world. Erikson, a Freudian ego-psychologist, basically widened the scope of psychoanalytic theory to give greater consideration to social, cultural, and environmental factors.

According to Erikson, human development takes place over eight psychosocial stages. At each stage, the individual faces a predominant “crisis,” a turning point of enhanced potential. The more successfully the individual resolves the “crisis” at each stage, the higher will be the success rate at which the conflict at the next stage would be resolved and, subsequently, the healthier would be the development of the individual’s overall personality. A successful resolution of a conflict results in the individual’s developing a specific psychosocial virtue at the respective stage. The next section presents the eight stages in more detail.

Stages in Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory of Development

Trust versus mistrust is the first conflict, or the first psychosocial stage, that an individual experiences in the first year of life. In this first year of life, infants depend on others for food, warmth, and affection and must trust their parents or caregivers for providing for their needs. If their needs are met in a responsive and consistent manner, infants will learn to trust their environment, and develop a secure attachment with their caregivers. If their needs are not responded to they will then develop mistrust toward people and things in their environment, and possibly even toward themselves. A positive resolution of the conflict of trust versus mistrust will result in the emergence of the psychosocial virtue of *hope*.

Autonomy versus shame and doubt is the second of Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development and occurs between the ages of one and three years. During this period, toddlers begin to learn how to walk, talk, use the toilet, and do things for themselves. They begin to discover that their behavior is their own, and that they are able to control it. They begin to assert their sense of independence and autonomy. If parents encourage this assertion for independence and are reassuring when their child makes mistakes, the child will develop confidence in making future choices and decisions. If parents are overprotective, or disapproving of this assertion for independence, their child may become ashamed of being independent, or doubtful of his or her abilities. A positive resolution of this conflict enables a child to realize his or her *will*.

Initiative versus guilt is the third stage to occur between the preschool years of three and six. Children begin to develop and master motor skills and become more engaged in social interactions with people in their widening social world. This leads to an eagerness for more adventure in order to test the limits for their newfound skills. However, they also need to learn how to achieve a balance between their eagerness and their impulsiveness in making grandiose plans. If their parents and teachers are encouraging and can work with the children on realistic goals that can be achieved, children learn to feel confident in using their imagination. If, however, they are unsupervised by the adults and they continue to engage in impulsive fantasies that are doomed to fail, children begin to feel guilty and ashamed of taking risks and engaging in make-believe play. Positive

experiences during this stage result in the development of the psychosocial virtue of courage and a sense of *purpose*.

Industry versus inferiority is the fourth stage that occurs between the ages of six and eleven years. Children of this age are in elementary school, and are beginning to make the transition into a world of academics and competing peers. Even as they are industriously learning new reading, writing, math, and social skills, they are evaluating their own abilities in the learning of these skills. If children find pleasure in intellectual stimulation and are able to master skills easily and earn praise for their efforts, they feel successful and productive. On the other hand, negative outcomes in the struggle to learn these skills can result in the child's feeling inferior to peers. A positive resolution of the conflict at this stage promotes the development of a sense of *competence*, yet another psychosocial virtue.

Identity versus role confusion occurs during adolescence and the individual now must integrate the healthy resolutions of all the previous stages in order to successfully answer the question "Who am I?" Individuals who have dealt with earlier conflicts successfully are ready for the "identity crisis" and emerge from this conflict with a strong sense of self, as well as the psychosocial virtue of *fidelity* and loyalty to one's self. If not, the individual will sink into confusion, unable to make decisions about one's own vocation, responsibilities, beliefs, and values.

Intimacy versus isolation is the sixth conflict and occurs during young adulthood. This stage is marked by intimate relationships. An individual who has not yet developed a sense of identity usually finds it difficult to enter into an intimate relationship or commitment and may retreat into isolation. Individuals who are able to form intimate and healthy relationships, and are able to share themselves with others, find the psychosocial virtue of *love*.

Generativity versus stagnation is the seventh stage and occurs during adulthood. By generativity, Erikson means the ability to look outside of one's self to care for and assist those from a different generation. During this stage, individuals not only feel the desire to create a living legacy and help the next generation, but also find themselves in the position of having to care for their ailing parents. Individuals can solve this crisis by having their own children or nurturing others in various ways. A successful resolution of this crisis results in the emergence of the psychosocial virtue of *care*, whereas a negative outcome in terms of the inability to assist others results in a sense of self-centeredness and stagnation.

Integrity versus despair is the last of the eight stages in the individual's development and occurs during old age. Old age is the time when individuals experience loss in various forms such as retirement, failing health, death of siblings and peers, and so forth. It is a time when the individual looks back and reflects upon his or her personal life and its role in the larger scheme of things. If the older person has experienced positive outcomes at the earlier stages of life, this retrospection will reveal a life well spent, and a feeling of satisfaction and a sense of integrity will prevail. If not, the individual will feel a sense of hopelessness and despair as the end of life approaches. This process of in-depth reflection and revelation leads to the development of the psychosocial virtue of *wisdom*.

Erikson did not believe that individuals must experience *only* the positive emotions. A positive outcome during each of the stages would result if the individual

experienced more positive and fewer negative dimensions of the conflict. Some exposure to the negative emotions was also considered necessary. For instance, if a baby were to experience only trust and no mistrust, it would not prepare him or her to be able to discriminate whom to trust under different circumstances in order to survive in the world. Nevertheless, Erikson certainly believed that a positive resolution should dominate at each stage in order for the individual to develop a healthy personality.

Early childhood education in the United States became closely defined by Erikson's ideas. This theory of psychosocial development has had a profound impact on scholarly and lay interest in the social-emotional domain of children's development, and on a corresponding social-emotional curriculum for early childhood classrooms. Because the emerging psychosocial virtues for each stage would ultimately define the individual's identity, Erikson is often called the "architect of identity." He was concerned with the effect of rapid social changes in the United States, is credited for widening the scope of psychoanalytical theory to a greater consideration of social, cultural, and environmental factors.

It is interesting to note that Erikson's biographer, Robert Coles, noticed the effect of history, culture, and environment on Erikson's own work. Erikson's Danish parents were from Copenhagen, where the existentialist philosopher Kierkegaard had lived, and it is told that Erikson's mother had read books by Kierkegaard and Emerson during her pregnancy and Erikson's infancy. When Coles wrote that the roots of psychoanalysis were buried in nineteenth-century science and philosophy, he had traced a line of influence from Soren Kierkegaard, who examined the psychology of man from a theologian's perspective and believed that each man's mind had its own specific history and destiny; to the work of Viennese physician and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud in his studies of the human mind; and, finally, to child psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, who years later would insist that it was necessary to pay attention to both the individual and society because "every life, every 'conflict,' every nation has a background and a future" (Coles, 1970, p. 42). *See also* Sex and Sexuality in Young Children.

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Amita Gupta

Q

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is empirically based inquiry through which researchers seek to understand the perspectives of human actors in social settings. Research is empirically based when data are collected and analyzed systematically. Data for qualitative studies usually include transcribed interviews, field notes from observations, and unobtrusively collected evidence such as documents and artifacts. Qualitative data analysis is inductive and interpretive in nature, and findings are grounded in the data that generated them. Understanding how individuals make sense of the natural contexts in which they operate every day is the aim of qualitative research, so studies are undertaken in natural settings, and capturing perspectives on the contexts in which participants act is essential to the research process.

Characteristics that distinguish qualitative from quantitative research include the following:

- **Natural Settings**—Qualitative researchers study social phenomena as they occur in everyday life because they believe human behavior cannot be understood outside the contexts of its natural occurrence.
- **Participants' Perspectives**—Describing the insider perspectives of actors in specific social settings is a primary concern of qualitative researchers.
- **Researcher as Instrument**—The principal data of qualitative studies are gathered directly by researchers themselves.
- **Extended Engagement**—Spending long periods of direct engagement in the contexts in which social phenomena are enacted is important to understanding participant perspectives.
- **Centrality of Meaning**—Understanding the meanings that individuals use to negotiate their social surroundings is an essential element of qualitative work.
- **Complexity**—Qualitative researchers assume that social settings are unique, dynamic, and complex, and they resist approaches that reduce complex settings to isolated variables.
- **Subjectivity**—Qualitative work is interested in inner states at the core of human activity, and bringing these inner states to light requires the application of researchers' subjective judgment.

- **Flexible Design**—Because the act of doing qualitative research often leads researchers in directions they did not anticipate, research questions, methods, and analysis procedures are sometimes altered as research designs are implemented.
- **Reflexivity**—Qualitative researchers acknowledge that they are part of the worlds they study, so systematically monitoring their influence and bracketing their biases is part of their research responsibility (Hatch and Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006).

While the use of qualitative methods is relatively new in applied fields such as education and early childhood education, the foundations of qualitative research were established in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology beginning in the early 1900s. Early anthropological work was characterized by ethnographic studies of “primitive” cultures in faraway places. Qualitative sociologists of the same period (many of whom were associated with “Chicago Sociology” at the University of Chicago) studied life experiences of working-class and poor immigrants in urban centers in the United States. Early qualitative studies in education settings were begun in the 1960s, mostly by sociologists and anthropologists interested in studying the social contexts of education.

Qualitative studies that focused on contexts involving young children began to be published in the 1980s. Early examples done in the United States include Corsaro’s (1985) sociological analysis of peer culture in a preschool and Lubeck’s (1985) comparison of how cultural values were transmitted in a Head Start serving African American children and a preschool program for white students. An important early childhood qualitative study in the United Kingdom was Pollard’s (1985) examination of children’s experience of primary schooling, and Davies’ (1982) study of children’s social interaction in classrooms and on playgrounds was an early qualitative study completed in Australia.

Given some shared foundations and overarching characteristics, many different approaches to doing qualitative research have evolved over the past four decades. Some of the approaches that have been used in qualitative early childhood studies are outlined below:

Ethnographies: Ethnography is a particular kind of qualitative research that seeks to describe culture or parts of culture from the point of view of cultural insiders. Ethnographers employ interviewing, observation, and artifact collection as their primary data collection techniques. Ethnography is the classic form of qualitative research that was developed by anthropologists who spend extended periods of time doing fieldwork within cultural groups. Contemporary ethnographers often study subcultures, communities, or classrooms, but their goals remain consistent with those of classic fieldworkers.

Participant Observation Studies: Participant observation studies use the same data collection tools as ethnographies, but they are not ethnographies because participant observation studies are much narrower in scope and usually involve less time in the field. Participant observation studies place researchers in social settings, but they do not have the broad purpose of capturing all of the cultural knowledge that insiders use to make sense of those settings. Researchers using this framework enter research settings with specific interests and specific questions in mind, and these interests and questions concentrate their studies in ways that ethnographers do not.

Interview Studies: While it is often a part of participant observation research, interviewing can be the primary data collection strategy in a qualitative project. Qualitative researchers utilize special interview strategies that are different in nature from interviews done in quantitative studies. Qualitative interviewers create a special kind of speech event during which they ask open-ended questions, encourage informants to explain their unique perspectives on the issues at hand, and listen intently for special language and other clues that reveal meaning structures informants use to understand their worlds.

Grounded Theory Studies: In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) outlined a model that serves as a guide for collecting and analyzing qualitative data in rigorous, systematic, and disciplined ways. Grounded theory studies generate theories inductively derived from careful analysis of qualitative data. Vital to these procedures is the notion of constant comparison, through which researchers engage in detailed analytic processes that require repeated confirmations of potential explanatory patterns of meaning discovered in the data.

Narrative Studies: **Narrative** research is focused on gathering and interpreting the stories that people use to describe their lives. Different types of narrative studies include life histories, life story research, biography, personal experience methods, oral history, and narrative inquiry. All are based on the notion that humans make sense of their lives through story. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) identify the following methods for generating the data of narrative studies: oral history; annals and chronicles; family stories; photographs, memory boxes, and other personal/family artifacts; research interviews; journals; autobiographical writing; letters; conversations; and field notes and other stories from the field.

Case Studies: Researchers from many disciplines and many paradigms (qualitative and quantitative) call their work case studies. Qualitative case studies are a special kind of research that investigates a contextualized phenomenon within specified boundaries. Merriam (1988) offers examples of such bounded phenomena in education: “a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (p. 13). Data collection and analysis procedures parallel those of other qualitative approaches. It is their focus on bounded systems that makes qualitative case studies different.

Those who hold traditional views of what constitutes research see limitations in the application of qualitative methods in early childhood education or other social science fields. These critics believe that any form of research should be measured against the tenets of quantitative approaches in terms of validity, reliability, and generalizability. They argue that the small samples in most qualitative studies, the subjective nature of data collection and analysis, and the lack of controlled variables make qualitative findings idiosyncratic, subject to researcher bias, and impossible to replicate. Qualitative researchers counter that the assumptions at the base of their research approaches are fundamentally different from those of quantitative methods, that different does not mean inferior, and that the worth of qualitative findings should be judged using criteria developed within qualitative research paradigms (Hatch, 2002).

Proponents argue that the strengths of early childhood qualitative research include its ability to reveal the experiences of those who live in the contexts in

which early education and care happen. They claim that high quality qualitative studies provide vivid portraits of the how life unfolds in early childhood contexts. And, they say that qualitative approaches make possible an enriched understanding of the behaviors of actors as they negotiate the meaning structures of the settings that define early childhood. Qualitative researchers believe their contributions to early childhood theory, practice, and policy formation are at least as valuable as those of quantitative researchers.

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J. Amos Hatch

Quantitative Analyses/Experimental Designs

Quantitative (parametric) statistics are used to analyze data collected in group research designs, including nonexperimental designs as well as natural experiments, quasi-experiments, and randomized trial experimental designs (Shadish et al., 2002.) These are all multisubject designs in which characteristics of interest are measured systematically across a sample of participants. There are important differences between quantitative and **qualitative research** methodologies as they respond to education research questions.

In a recent monograph focused on scientific research in education, the National Research Council (2002) suggested that many education research questions can be characterized as addressing questions of “description—what is happening? cause—is there a systematic effect? and process or mechanisms—why or how is it happening?” (p. 99). Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in analyses of data collected to answer questions related to description. In general, experimental research methods and quantitative analyses are used to answer questions related to (a) relations among variables and (b) differences between groups.

Correlational studies are “quantitative, multi-subjects designs in which participants have not been randomly assigned to treatment conditions” (Thompson et al., 2005, p. 182). The analytic models applied with these designs are designed to evaluate the relations among two or more variables of interest. These analytic methods include multiple regression analysis, canonical correlation analysis, hierarchical linear modeling and structural equation modeling (Thompson et al.,

2005). Although they do not provide definitive causal evidence, results from correlational studies can offer directions for future experimental research designs. The use of sophisticated causal modeling or exclusion methods in correlational designs provides some basis through which “correlational evidence can at least tentatively inform evidence-based practice” (Thompson et al., 2005, p. 190).

In contrast to correlational designs, analyses of data collected using natural experiments, quasi-experimental or experimental designs typically focus on outcome differences between groups (e.g., analysis of variance, analysis of covariance, multivariate analysis of variance) or different rates of growth (e.g., growth curve analysis with multiple data points; multivariate repeated-measures analysis of variance). A brief description of each of these types of experimental designs appears below, followed by general comments on analytic strategies.

Natural experiments are group designs in which a “naturally occurring contrast between a treatment and a comparison condition” (Shadish et al., 2002, p. 17) is the focus of the research question. For example, the Swedish Adoption/Twin Study of Aging is a natural experiment in which data collected on pairs of twins separated at a young age and reared apart (46 identical, 100 fraternal pairs) are compared with data from matched pairs of twins reared together (67 pairs of identical and 89 pairs of fraternal twins). Data from this study have been used to understand genetic and environmental influences on cognitive and social behaviors (cf. Bergeman et al., 2001; Kato and Pedersen, 2005). Because it would be unethical to experimentally assign infants to be separated from their parents and siblings, twin studies such as this one rely on naturally occurring events in children’s lives. Other examples of natural experiments include studies of children living in orphanages (e.g., Morison and Elwood, 2000) and of adults with mental retardation (Skeels and Dye, 2002). Natural experiments such as these often fit the definition of quasi-experimental research designs (described below) when there is a comparison group against which children in the intervention are compared. The Swedish Twin Study is an example of a natural quasi-experimental design.

Of particular interest in education and intervention research are answers to questions about the effects of interventions and the mechanisms through which those effects might occur. These are often referred to as “What works?” and “How does it happen?” questions (National Research Council, 2002). Quasi-experimental and experimental research designs are typically used to address these types of research questions. In quasi-experimental and experimental designs, researchers are interested in understanding different treatment or intervention effects across two or more groups. In a true experiment (described as a randomized controlled-trial design, below), participants are randomly assigned to an intervention or control (nontreatment, placebo) group. In contrast, assignment to group is by means of self-selection in a quasi-experimental design. In this case, unknown preexisting differences may be systematically associated with group selection. This makes it difficult to exclude all possible alternative explanations if different intervention outcomes are found across groups (Shadish et al., 2002). Many important and policy-relevant research questions, including questions about the effectiveness of intervention programs such as Head Start and the contributions of different types of early care to children’s development, are addressed

using quasi-experimental methods (cf. NICHD ECCRN, 2004; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

Randomized controlled trial designs are the best approach for understanding how specific intervention components are related to outcomes for children or families (Feuer et al., 2002). The unique strength of randomized experimental designs “is in describing the consequences attributable to deliberately varying a treatment” (Shadish et al., 2002, p. 9). In randomized designs, participants are assigned to experimental groups by chance. If done correctly, random assignment creates two or more groups that are probabilistically similar on average. When an intervention is applied to one group (the experimental group) but not to the other (control or placebo group), or when different types of interventions are applied across groups, and differences in outcomes are detected, such outcome differences can be attributed to the intervention (Gersten et al., 2005; Shadish et al., 2002).

Because there are at least two groups (treatment and comparison), analyses of data collected using natural experiments, quasi-experimental designs, or randomized controlled trials use general linear modeling techniques (including variations of analysis of variance, growth curve modeling, and hierarchical linear modeling) to compare group outcomes (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). Because there are often several potential units of analysis (e.g., data collected on children, teachers, and schools provide three different units of analysis), multilevel analyses (such as hierarchical linear modeling or growth curve modeling) are often most appropriate (Gersten et al., 2005). Current recommendations also require researchers to provide evidence that the research design has sufficient power to detect group differences and to provide evidence for the size of the intervention effect as well as evidence of significant differences between groups (Gersten et al., 2005; National Research Council, 2002).

In addition to the correlational and group designs described above, analyses designed to provide descriptive information, and analyses of the psychometric characteristics of assessment instruments, also fit within the broad category of quantitative analyses. Descriptive education research methods include those designed to allow statements about the characteristics of a population, descriptions of simple relationships between variables, or descriptions of special groups or populations (National Research Council, 2002). For example, information about the average level and variability of characteristics of interest is typically addressed by providing data on central tendencies such as the mean or median, and on variability such as standard deviation. Nonexperimental research designs also include procedures used in scale development. Analytic approaches may include factor analysis (including principal-components analysis and confirmatory factor analysis) and assessments of internal consistency reliability (calculation of Cronbach's alpha).

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Karen Diamond

R

Race and Ethnicity in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood professionals working with young children in diverse settings have come to realize the salience of race and ethnicity in the lives of their students. It is important for teachers, caregivers, and parents to understand the impact of race and ethnicity in order to facilitate positive identity development, especially for children of color. This is particularly salient in the United States, unlike other homogeneous societies, because race matters as a sociopolitical construction and immigration policies are being constantly contested. Helping children of color and English language learners deal with prejudice and discrimination is a responsibility for all Americans.

Sometimes the terms race and ethnicity have been used interchangeably although they refer to different categories. Race is a complicated sociopolitical construct created by human beings and no longer defined by biology. In traditional sociology and anthropology race was associated with phenotype, or biological characteristics of hair texture and color, skin color, head shape, and other body features. Historically race had also been associated with intelligence and determined by blood quantum. These categorizations have led to stereotyping, racism, and discriminatory practices by individuals and institutions.

Ethnicity is expressed by cultural beliefs, values, language, and communication patterns brought by immigrants from throughout the world. Ethnicity has roots in countries of origin and reflects heritage, but it has evolved over generations in the United States. For example, a first-generation Asian American may speak the language of origin (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Hmong) while a third- or fourth-generation child may not speak the language or know very much about the culture of his or her immigrant grandparents. Some African Americans prefer the term *black*, which has roots in American slavery, while others may call themselves African, having recently emigrated from an African country. American Indians and native Hawaiians fall into the category of indigenous peoples, and would not be considered ethnic groups.

In American society today, interracial, interethnic marriage has become common so there are a growing number of biracial, mixed-heritage children who may be struggling with their self-identity. It is important to let them self-identify and choose positive attributes from their family race and ethnicity rather than adopting a color-blind perspective. The salience of race, ethnicity, or native origin depends upon individual perceptions, group affiliation, and how one is constructed by others in their community. Children of color are more likely to be constructed as “other” in a race-conscious society. Children whose first language is not English are more likely to be considered “foreign” even if they were born in the United States.

Racial inequality continues to be a problem in American society. The State of America’s Children 2005 produced by the Children’s Defense Fund reports that black, American Indian, and Asian families have higher percentages of poverty compared to whites (whites 11.2%, blacks 33.1%, American Indian and Alaska Natives 31.6% and Asians 14.3%). Non-Latino black and Latino women are less likely to have prenatal care, while infant mortality before their first birthday for blacks is more than twice that of white babies (14.4 vs. 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births). Inequality between white children and children of color exists in the number of children immunized, the number of children in foster care, and the number of children who are uninsured. In terms of education, there are more black and Latino children enrolled in Head Start (year 2003–2004) than white children (black 34.3%, Latino 37.2%, white 29.5%). And in terms of achievement in math and reading at the fourth-grade level, more black and Hispanic students scored below grade level compared to white students (Reading: white 61%, black 88%, Hispanic 85%. Math: white 53%, black 87%, Hispanic 81%). These statistics indicate that there is inequity in access to services and support for achievement by race.

In early childhood education, issues of racial identity development, antibias curriculum, and cross-cultural peer relationships are of concern. Consistent with Piagetian theory, the content of self-concept is linked to cognitive maturation and young children often identify themselves in terms of membership to certain groups defined by physical characteristics. Awareness of skin color and classification of others in the environment are common, but personality traits and psychological criteria associated with race develop later in middle childhood. In addition, children of color tend to have higher and earlier racial awareness than their white peers. Biracial children rely heavily on parental beliefs about the salience of race and modeling from family and communities of color.

A large body of research over several decades embodies the well-known findings that European American children prefer their own racial group and African American children also share that preference, sometimes misidentifying themselves as white. Research indicates that dark-skinned children are devalued as members of society and, contrary to common belief, there is little empirical evidence that cross-race friendships or voluntary associations are naturally made. Often these contacts are initiated by teachers or other significant adults. Children as young as three years old are *not* color blind and racism or negative meanings attached to racial difference is learned from environmental norms (school and home). A variety of research on black and white racial identity has presented stage theories

of identity development that span a lifetime but little has been done on other racial groups such as Asian Americans or indigenous Americans (native Indians and Hawaiians).

In the future, early childhood professionals need to become cognizant of the research on white privilege since an overwhelming majority of teachers of young children in the United States are white and middle class. Resources for parents and caregivers on raising children in a multiracial, multicultural world, and on teaching tolerance have provided insight to real life incidents of racism and discrimination. Much more needs to be done by researchers and practitioners to assure that children of color develop positive racial identities and all children learn to value human differences and social justice for all.

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Susan Matoba Adler

Read, Katherine (1904–1991)

Katherine Haskell Read influenced the field of early childhood education worldwide for over half a century. In 1950, she wrote the first textbook for college students preparing to teach young children, *The Nursery School: A Human Relationships Laboratory*. The ninth edition, coauthored with Pat Gardner and Barbara Child Mahler, was published in 1993 using an updated title, *Early Childhood Programs: Human Relationships and Learning*. Various editions of her text were translated into Danish, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Swedish, German, and Norwegian.

Katherine Haskell was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on April 10, 1904. After graduating from Mills College, Phi Beta Kappa, with a BA in political science in 1925, she worked as a psychologist at the Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago from 1926 to 1928. She married George Read, who died several years after their daughter, Anne, was born in 1933. From 1929 to 1931 she taught nursery school at Purdue. After doing graduate work at the University of Chicago and Purdue, she received an MS from Purdue in 1938. She served as an instructor

at Purdue from 1935 to 1940 and as supervisor of WPA nursery schools in Indiana in 1938. In 1941 she became an assistant professor of Household Administration at Oregon State University, attaining full professorship in 1948. During World War II she worked in the Kaiser Shipyards' famous Lanham Act child care facilities. She became professor of Child Development at Oregon State and headed the Department of Family Life and Home Administration from 1952 to 1965.

Throughout her life, Katherine embraced the perspectives of British psychoanalysts Anna Freud and David Winnicott, focusing—during the learning process—on the feelings and attitudes of children, of parents, and of adults who work with young children. She believed that self-understanding on the part of teachers was critical for helping young children to understand themselves. Her “Guides to Speech and Action” have endured and most are regarded as useful and appropriate today as they were fifty years ago (e.g., “State suggestions or directions in a positive rather than negative form,” and “Give the child a choice only when you intend to leave the choice up to him”). Katherine was a major supporter of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**, which published her articles and books. Katherine Read retired in 1965, married G. Maurice Baker, and moved to England. She died in 1991.

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Carol S. Huntsinger

Read-Alouds and Vocabulary Development

Read-alouds, or reading aloud to children, is sometimes referred to as shared storybook reading. A common practice in many homes and early childhood settings, read-aloud time is a productive means for giving children opportunities to develop new meaning vocabulary. Because children's books present more advanced, less familiar vocabulary than everyday speech (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998), listening to books being read aloud helps children go beyond their existing oral vocabularies; and it presents them with new concepts and vocabulary. Talking with children after shared storybook reading also gives children opportunities to use new vocabulary in the more decontextualized setting of a book discussion.

The variance in vocabulary knowledge of young children is well established. In 1995 Betty Hart and Todd Risley, two researchers at the University of Kansas who looked at parent-child interactions among different social groups, found some striking differences among preschoolers. On average, professional parents talked to their toddlers more than three times as much as parents of families on welfare did. Not surprisingly, that difference resulted in a big discrepancy in the children's vocabulary size. The average three-year-old from a welfare family demonstrated an active vocabulary of around 500 words, whereas a three-year-old from a professional family demonstrated a vocabulary of over 1,000 words.

Those differences become more pronounced as children get older—by the time the low-income children get to school and start to learn to read; they're already at an enormous disadvantage. It is estimated that children from economically privileged homes enter kindergarten having heard some 30 million more words than students from economically disadvantaged homes. Furthermore, the difference in time spent in "lap reading," sitting in the lap of an adult and listening to a book being read, may be of the magnitude of 4,000 to 6,000 hours.

Numerous studies have documented the fact that young children can learn word meanings incidentally from read-aloud experiences (Eller et al., 1988; Elley, 1988; Robbins and Ehri, 1994). In school settings, the effect is large for children age five and older and smaller for those under age four. Involving children in discussions during and after listening to a book has also produced significant word learning, especially when the teacher scaffolded this learning by asking questions, adding information, or prompting students to describe what they heard. Some (Whitehurst et al., 1994; Whitehurst et al., 1999) have called this process "dialogic reading."

Contrary to expectations, storybook reading with young children is not always a positive experience. Some read-aloud situations are less optimal than others and research also suggests that this scaffolding (providing explanations, asking questions, clarifying) may be more essential to those children who are less likely to learn new vocabulary easily. Children with less rich initial vocabularies are less likely to learn new vocabulary incidentally and need a thoughtful, well-designed, scaffolded approach to maximize learning from shared storybook reading (Robbins and Ehri, 1994; Senechal et al., 1995). Instructional strategies such as "text talk" (Beck et al., 2004) and "vocabulary visits" (Blachowicz and Obrochta, 2005) have been built on insights from this research.

De Temple and Snow (2003) draw the contrast between talk around shared storybook reading that is cognitively challenging and talk that is not. There has been substantial research on the nature and effects of storybook reading in both home and school settings which supports their view and suggests ways in which read-alouds can maximize student vocabulary learning (Neuman and Dickinson, 2001). This research suggests the following:

- Children can learn the meaning of unknown words through incidental exposure during storybook reading.
- With traditional storybook readings, unless there is attention to scaffolding for those with less rich initial vocabularies, the vocabulary differences between children continue to grow over time.
- Children learn more words when books are read multiple times.
- Children do not benefit from being talked at or read to, but from being talked with and read with in ways requiring their response and activity.
- Natural, scaffolded reading can result in more learning than highly dramatic "performance" reading by the adult
- Children learn more words when books are read in small groups.

In sum, most researchers agree on several principles related to developing vocabulary with read-aloud storybook reading in schools. First, there should be some direct teaching/explanation of vocabulary during storybook reading in school settings. Second, adult-child discussion should be interactive and discussion should focus on cognitively challenging ways to interact with the text rather than

literal, one-word or yes/no questions. Children need to be able to contribute to the discussion in a substantial way, and smaller groups of five or six allow for this type of interaction. Third, the re-reading of texts in which vocabulary is repeated can maximize learning; informational texts and text sets can both capitalize on children's interest in "real" things (trucks, dinosaurs, pandas) as well as providing repetition on thematically related words. Lastly, the nature of the learning that occurs is different with familiar and unfamiliar books. In an initial reading the children may focus on the plot or storyline. In subsequent readings the reasons for characters' actions, especially unfamiliar vocabulary, may become the focus of their interest. Read-alouds can be a potent tool for exposing students to new vocabulary in a meaningful and pleasurable way.

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Camille L.Z. Blachowicz and Peter J. Fisher

Readiness

Readiness, as a general construct, signifies developmental status relative to some task or set of tasks. Children are ready for potty training, they are ready to spend the night at a friend's house, they are ready to crawl. In U.S. contexts, readiness has a specific meaning connected to the start of formal schooling. The definition provided here focuses on this type of readiness, examining the skills, dispositions, and abilities expected of children as they enter **kindergarten**.

The idea of readiness for school was created in the context of a developing system of formal education and more specifically the implementation of compulsory schooling (Snow, 2006). Entrance criteria for the early grades were developed to signal an idea of readiness—a model indexed to a particular age. Readiness gained

both practical and scientific currency in the early twentieth century through the work of Arnold Gesell, who argued that readiness was essentially a biological construct, determined by the physical unfolding of the developing organism (Gesell, 1926). From this nativist and maturationist perspective teachers and families were cautioned to carefully assess children's readiness and to avoid "overplacement" in contexts that placed demands for which children were unready. Maturationist philosophy motivated a variety of practices designed to make sure that children were ready for the rigors of school. *Developmental screening* purportedly measured readiness for kindergarten, with the intention that unready children would wait a year. *Academic redshirting* called for delaying kindergarten entry for boys who were young relative to a kindergarten entrance cutoff, socially and emotionally immature, or physically small. *Kindergarten retention* places unready children in kindergarten for an additional year and *transitional programs* either before or after kindergarten were designed to create developmental curriculum for children who needed additional time to grow and develop. While these solutions to readiness problems had practical appeal, empirically, they have limited research support. Developmental screening poorly predicts kindergarten or later outcomes; children who are redshirted, retained, or attend transitional programs do not gain an advantage over their relatively younger peers and they have higher than expected incidence of social and emotional problems later in schooling (Graue and DiPerna, 2000; Meisels, 1999; Stipek, 2002). The lack of evidence to support maturationist practices parallels eroding support for maturationist theory as an explanatory tool for understanding child development. Rather than assuming linear maturation of individuals, theorists in areas as diverse as child development, psychology, literacy, and anthropology increasingly view development as multiply determined, occurring in specific contexts, and leveraged by specific expectations and resources. From this more socially oriented perspective, readiness is a contingent characteristic that certainly involves children but also requires attention to schools, communities, and families.

Current conceptions of readiness locate readiness dialectically, as a measure of the child relative to a particular historical and developmental context. For those who work from a developmental systems perspective, child readiness is considered in relation to the varied social systems in which a child lives and the degree to which these systems facilitate or constrain development (Mashburn and Pianta, 2006). Key to readiness are secure relationships among children, teachers, and families who support the growing child. Social constructivists assume that while readiness is expressed through child characteristics, it is a socially negotiated meaning held by stakeholders in local settings (Graue, 1993). When readiness is seen as socially constructed, it is entirely sensible that **assessment** of readiness will vary across raters, because the meanings they have for what constitutes a ready child vary as well. A related approach comes from evolutionary developmental psychology, which points to schools as culturally developed institutions into which human children are socialized (Bjorkland and Bering, cited in Snow, 2006).

Increasingly, policy concerns about readiness focus on its malleability, recognizing that readiness is developed in interaction with the environment across the preschool years. Initial definition by the **National Education Goals Panel** focused

on a whole-child image of readiness, composed of (1) physical well-being and motor development, (2) social and emotional development, (3) approaches to learning, (4) language development, and (5) cognition and general knowledge (National Education Goals Panel, 1995), with attention to both ready children and ready schools. There is growing attention on programs that enhance readiness in the preschool years in indicator systems that track both institutional supports for children and families and child outcomes predictive of readiness, on developing definitions and measurements of readiness, and on the critical role that kindergarten plays in child readiness. These efforts work within a number of tensions: the incredible variability in the contexts experienced by young children prior to kindergarten, the diversity of kindergarten programs, and the developmental variation among children in the early years. This combination of variability makes defining a single set of readiness skills or characteristics a daunting task.

As the theoretical, conceptual, measurement, and instructional work continues, readiness practice focuses on providing adequate resources for children, families, and schools to support readiness across the developmental domains. Strategies that support readiness include responsive systems of early care and education that coordinate service delivery systems of health care, high quality child care, and publicly funded pre-K programs, and readiness indicator systems that track the availability of these resources. Receptive schools welcome all children when they are legally eligible to enter by being both developmental and inclusive in their approach.

Together, these viewpoints illustrate the importance of linking child and context in all considerations of readiness. Definitions of readiness need to consider ready children and ready schools, ready families and ready communities. Any conceptualization of readiness acknowledges its multidimensional nature, that it is a birth-to-five process that can be nurtured in diverse environments, and that it develops within an ecological system in which we all have responsibility (Snow, 2006). *See also* Constructivism; Grade Retention; Maturationism.

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Reconceptualists

The reconceptualist movement in early childhood education gained momentum in the 1980s, with conversations among scholars around the world who problematized the dominance of psychology and child development theory and drew from an array of other, more critical and postmodern perspectives in their work. These researchers, like those in a growing number of disciplines, are critical of the dominance of Enlightenment, modernist and western interpretations of the world that assume the existence of universal truths or natural laws as applicable and generalizable to all human beings. In the more specific case of early childhood education, contemporary reconceptualist scholars question the belief that scientific truths could or should be “discovered” about any individual or group of children and then applied to all younger human beings, no matter the culture, language, belief structure, or physical life circumstance. Many are feminists working with critical personal narrative and autobiography; some are engaged in contemporary, including postmodern, psychoanalytic scholarship; some work from a critical, poststructural lens; and still others are engaged in postcolonial critique as well as social justice work that focuses on decolonizing the field. Overall, reconceptualizing has come from within a context and value structure that strives to appreciate and support diversity in people, ideas, and ways of being, at the same time recognizing that privileging any particular set of beliefs and forms of knowledge can create power for certain groups of people and oppress and disqualify others.

The theoretical interpretations and forms of research employed in reconceptualizing the field of early childhood education have emerged from individuals and groups with personal and career histories focused on issues of social justice, equity, oppression and power, and diversity and opportunity. Reconceptualizing the field has included a focus on challenging grand narratives that serve to control and limit human beings, recognizing and embracing diversity in ways of living and being in the world, while acknowledging the sociopolitical, historical embeddedness in which human life resides. Reconceptualist work is concerned with revealing circumstances in which power and privilege are created for some groups of people while “others” are judged and disqualified as lacking or labeled as disadvantaged, yet continuously struggles to avoid the creation of new truths, or grand narratives, from reconceptualist perspectives. These concerns in the field of early childhood education have been addressed using various forms of critique, including qualitative naturalistic research that attends to the voices of peoples who are often underrepresented, historical genealogy, theory juxtaposition, and critical personal narrative.

An increasing number of early childhood educators are joining others in challenging European American discourses that have been generally accepted as universal truths. These “grand narratives”—which include everything from Western views of logic, to the Evangelical Christian discourse of salvation, to economic interpretations of human functioning whether Marxist or capitalist, to the imposition of Piagetian structuralism on all human cognition—have been questioned in a variety of fields and from diverse perspectives. The work of such scholars as Michel Foucault and Jacques Lyotard are good illustrations of the deconstruction of such dominant grand narratives.

Such challenges to universalist truths have been taken up by scholars in fields directly tied to early childhood education. Illustrations include the scholarship of Valerie Walkerdine and Erica Burman that directly challenges Piagetian developmental psychology and other developmental interpretations of the world. These examples illustrate the cultural embeddedness of the theories and the ways that human developmental perspectives have privileged Euro-American middle-class stereotypically masculine ways of interpreting and being in the world. In addition, various early childhood educators are influenced by the work of curriculum-studies scholars in education who, over the past 30 years, have reconceptualized the field from one of linear, determinist curriculum development to curriculum theory as understanding, human functioning, and learning—each as embedded within culture, history, politics, and social context.

Reconceptualist early childhood educators continue to address the grand narratives that dominate the field, illustrating the ways that beliefs in the “universal child” and universalist theories of thought and human change (e.g., developmental psychology, scientifically “discoverable” learning theories) actually place some groups of children into categories in which they are judged as normal, as on the “correct” human life path, and/or as even gifted—and “others” as delayed, slow, and possessing incorrect or less important knowledges and skills. As a critical example, much of the early reconceptualist scholarship (e.g., Kessler and Swadener, 1992) challenged the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s *Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, charging that the perspective is monocultural and ethnocentric and ignores the range of life contexts and knowledges experienced by children from diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and values contexts (e.g., individualistic orientations or connectedness of people as cultural ways of functioning). Applying a human or child development perspective on all people from all contexts, as if a natural universal human truth, has been revealed as privileging linear thought as well as privileging notions that define adults as superior to children, has been exposed as deterministic (and therefore limiting children), and ethnocentric (privileging Anglo, middle-class materialism and ways of life).

A large body of scholarly literature in education addresses cultural diversity in general, the recognition of diverse voices and knowledges, and the social and political embeddedness within which various groups function. Scholars whose work is often referenced by early childhood reconceptualists include Michael Apple, James Banks, Elizabeth Ellsworth, Michelle Fine, Paolo Freire, Geneva Gay, Madeline Grumet, Henry Giroux, Cameron McCarthy, Peter McLaren, Janet Miller, Christine Sleeter, and Joel Spring. Although surrounded by scholars in other areas of education whose work has been increasingly informed by cultural studies, feminist theory, critical perspectives, postmodernism, or poststructural theory, the field of early childhood education, in general, has continued to focus on individual, normative child development.

Reconceptualist early childhood educators and researchers have introduced these more diverse ways of understanding, questioning, and interpreting the world to the field. Much of the work envisions alternative perspectives in both theory and practice, demonstrates a willingness to ask difficult questions not previously addressed, integrates multiple voices (especially the voices that have

so often been disregarded), and draws from a variety of human perspectives in order to better understand the complexities and socially/culturally constructed aspects of childhood (e.g., Cannella, 1997).

In recent years, early childhood educators have become increasingly involved in work that reveals power and privilege and that demonstrates children's awareness of gendered and colonialist impositions. Some of the earliest publications that could be identified as addressing power and privilege actually relate to poverty in the lives of young children (e.g., Polakow, 1993). In addition, an eclectic literature has emerged that uses postcolonial theory in early childhood education, and covers a wide range of power issues that include contradictions and challenges in indigenous education (e.g., Kaomea, 2003), the colonization of early childhood education through universal prescriptions for "quality" (e.g., Dahlberg et al., 1999) and decolonizing methodologies. Researchers have also demonstrated children's recognition of colonialist binaries (e.g., Tobin, 2000), feminist methodologies and gender issues (Hauser and Jipson, 1998; MacNaughton, 2000), and possibilities for transformational early childhood practices in a global context (e.g., Ryan and Grieshaber, 2005), to name just a few.

The three issues discussed thus far represent only major broad categories of concern for the field of early childhood education and should not be interpreted as placing limits on reconceptualist perspectives. Scholarly work and resultant practices labeled reconceptualist cannot easily be placed into any particular category. In addition, many researchers and educators who have been labeled "reconceptualists" might ultimately resist notions of labeling of any type. Rather, these scholars offer diverse questions, the recognition of autobiographical embeddedness within their own work, and attempt to increase possibilities for ways of viewing and understanding the world as well as approaches for living with and educating those who are younger.

Partly in response to frustrations in finding appropriate outlets for dissemination of reconceptualist work in dominant venues (e.g., conferences and journals), the first *Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Research, Theory and Practice Conference* was organized and held in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1991. Since that time, conferences have been held in locations across the United States and in Australia, Norway, and New Zealand. Recent meetings have drawn participants from over fifteen countries. In 1999, a Critical Perspectives on ECE special-interest group was founded within the American Educational Research Association. Several publishing companies now devote an entire series to reconceptualizing early childhood education scholarship, and reconceptualist scholars have published in a range of journals and implemented various forms of critical practice in education and public policy work. The range of scholarship, activism, and involvement in reconceptualization has provided new forms of praxis in the field of early childhood education.

Reconceptualist scholars see a compelling need for this work in the context of recent public policy practices in the United States as well as around the world. Neoliberal policies such as welfare "reform" in the United States and the United Kingdom have been critiqued by reconceptualists within a critical advocacy and postmodern discourse (e.g., Bloch et al., 2004). U.S. legislative mandates like **No Child Left Behind** in 2001, Smart Start, and the National Research Council Report

on Scientific Research in Education demonstrate the ways that prevailing beliefs about “child,” “family,” and “education/care practices” are linked to sociopolitical agendas.

Reconceptualist perspectives and methodologies are oriented to and argue for “hope and possibility as we move toward a newly evolving, liberating ‘third space,’ an early childhood dreamscape of social justice and equity” (Soto, 2000, p. 198). Many reconceptualists believe that to ensure an equal and emancipatory early childhood education for both children and adults, all educators who are concerned about children and the future of human beings and the world, practitioners and theorists, teachers and parents, reconceptualists and developmentalists, must join together and take action in solidarity. *See also* Piaget, Jean.

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Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education

Reggio Emilia is a city in northern Italy where a volunteer group of educators, parents, and children came together after World War II with a shared vision for a new kind of school for young children. North Italy has a long history of civic engagement, trade guilds, and associations, and political activism and resistance to authoritarian government. At the war’s conclusion, mindful of the devastation and suffering they had endured, they came together to try to improve the future for working families and their children. They did not want ordinary schools but ones where children could begin to acquire skills of critical thinking and cooperation essential to rebuilding and ensuring a democratic society. Under the leadership of its charismatic founding director, Loris **Malaguzzi** (1920–1994), the small network of parent-run schools in Reggio Emilia evolved first into a

city-run system of preprimary schools (in the 1960s), and then added infant-toddler centers (in the 1970s). Even today the educators are evolving yet new forms of parent-professional and public-private partnerships to expand services to serve the whole city. Reggio Emilia educators have exercised a leadership role in educational innovation in Italy and Europe, and now increasingly the world. Their goal is for children to learn to engage in discussions and constructive play with others in a constructive and nonviolent way. Children (and families) are encouraged to express and discuss ideas in open meetings and to form close, long-term relationships with others in the school community. The Reggio Emilia preschools and infant-toddler centers are publicly supported and inclusive, giving first priority to children with disabilities and/or social service needs, such as low-income or immigrant status.

The Reggio Emilia approach is not an educational model in the formal sense, with defined methods, teacher certification standards, and accreditation processes. Instead, educators speak of their “experience” and how it can be a source of reflection or inspiration to others. Loris Malaguzzi was an integrative thinker, inspired by the great European progressive education tradition and by constructivist psychologists such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky. He drew a powerful image of the child who comes into the world social from birth, intelligent, curious, and competent. Malaguzzi’s vision of “education based on relationships” focuses on children in relation to people, things, and ideas. The goal is to activate and support children’s rich network of associations and their participation in a world of family members, peers, community members, and the physical environment. Children, teachers, parents, and other citizens all have their respective rights to participate in such a system, to contribute to it, and to grow and learn within it. In fact, children are expected to be active and resourceful and to generate innovation and change in the systems in which they are involved. Teachers seek to hold before them this powerful image of the child as they support children in exploring and investigating. Children grow in competence to represent their ideas and feelings and to investigate concepts through many avenues/formats/media of expressive, communicative, and cognitive representation. Their “100 languages” may include speaking, writing, gesturing, drawing, painting, building, sculpting, collage, wire-work, shadow play, dramatic/role play, music, dance, puppetry, photography, and computers, to name a few **symbolic languages** that they may systemically explore and combine. Adults follow children’s interests, and at teachable moments, they provide appropriate instruction in skills of reading and writing. They continually and indirectly foster language and **literacy**, counting, measuring, and problem-solving as children record and manipulate their concepts and communicate with others (including “writing” notes and letters). Teachers try to understand as fully as possible the children’s viewpoints and abilities, seeing each child as full of strengths rather than full of needs.

Teaching and learning are negotiated, emergent processes between adults and children, involving generous time and in-depth revisiting and reviewing. These processes depend on the knowledge that teachers and children have of each other according to the school-level organization for continuity that keeps them

together for two or three years. Parents and teachers also become closely acquainted, and this forms strong links between home and school. In such a context, long-term projects [*progettazione*] become important vehicles for open-ended investigations of subject matter, and these become longer and more elaborate as children grow older and more experienced in this way of learning. The classroom environment and arrangement of materials are carefully prepared to offer a sense of organization, comfort, and beauty and at the same time complexity and stimulation. The educators in Reggio Emilia believe the physical space should support children's communication and exchange of ideas; it has the features of a literacy-rich environment. It should also have emotional and aesthetic quality and use color, texture, and light to create values of transparency, reflectiveness, openness, harmony, balance, and softness. The environment makes a tangible statement to children, parents, and teachers that they are valued and respected. These are serious intentions, of course, yet the classroom atmosphere should be anything but sober and sedate. Rather, a classroom atmosphere of playfulness and joy should prevail in this kind of environment.

Time, too, is treated with special care. Children's own sense of time and their personal rhythm are considered in planning and carrying out activities and projects. When teachers lead activities, they provide enough time for spontaneous ideas to pop up and be discussed or explored. Children are given time to explore their ideas and hypotheses fully and in-depth. Projects and themes follow the children's ideas and development of concepts. Projects, activities and experiences such as field trips and celebrations build upon one another over time. Children review and revise their original work and ideas, refining them as they have further experiences, consider further questions, notice more details, make more connections, and acquire improved skills. Learning and development advance at their own pace, in widening and deepening cycles of understanding, not in prescribed, rigid sequences.

Teaching strategies are flexible and allow for input and decision making on the part of all participants. The Reggio Emilia approach is not a manual of strategies but instead a generalized way of working that must be adapted for each context and situation, because each one has its own unique history, constraints and problems, cast of characters, and assets and resources. For example, the format of parent-teacher partnership will vary from place to place, depending on the possibilities, negotiations, and preferences of the people involved. The most important principle is that teaching should be based on careful listening to and observation of children (and parents). Teachers begin by actively soliciting children's ideas and thoughts, considering what knowledge, questions, and preferences the children have before formulating plans and projects. Teachers usually work two to a classroom, and teamwork/mentoring is strongly promoted. A *pedagogista* (pedagogical specialist or education coordinator) works with several schools to guarantee high quality services. In addition, each school usually has a visual arts specialist (*atelierista*, or studio teacher) to work with teachers and children in classrooms as well as the *atelier* or studio to encourage expression through different media and symbol systems. Cooperation is encouraged among children through the use of small groups working together in common pursuit of

an investigation or project. These can last for a couple of days, weeks, or months depending on the age and interest level of the children.

Teachers seek to be partners and guides to the children as they learn. They carefully prepare the environment to ensure that it provides strong messages about respect for the children and for their learning. In working with children, they play a delicate balancing act between engagement and attentive watching. They ask questions to draw out the children's ideas, hypotheses, and theories. Then teachers discuss together what they have recorded and make flexible plans and preparations for next steps in learning. They also act as recorders for the children, helping them to trace and revisit their words and actions. Teachers offer new ways of looking at things to children, and provide related experiences and materials. They provide direct instruction in tool and material use when needed, help children to locate materials and resources, and scaffold children's learning—sometimes coming in close and interacting actively with them, sometimes remaining attentively observing and listening nearby. They also nurture the children's emotional needs, and support and develop caring, individualized relationships with each family. They act as advocates for high-quality services to the public and the government. Malaguzzi summed up all of this complexity of the teacher's role in metaphoric language when he said that:

We need a teacher who is sometimes the director, sometimes the set designer, sometimes the curtain and the backdrop, and sometimes the promoter. A teacher who is both sweet and stern, who is the electrician, who dispenses the paints and who is even the audience—the audience who watches, sometimes claps, sometimes remains silent, full of emotion, who sometimes judges with skepticism, and at other times applauds with enthusiasm. (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 73)

Children, clearly, are active participants in their learning. They make many choices throughout the day, including where to go in their classroom and building and on what to work. In addition to ongoing projects, children engage in many other forms of activity and play, including pretend play, singing, group games, storytelling, reading, cooking, outdoor play, rest, and relaxed and sociable meals together. They become part of a close-knit group, with their own unique routines and rituals and ways of expressing friendship and affection for one another.

Children's progress is observed and studied in nontraditional ways. **Documentation** is a cooperative practice that helps teachers listen to and see their children, thus guiding **curriculum** decisions and fostering **professional development** through collaborative study and reflection. Documentation helps teachers to follow, study, and make visible the ways that the group of children develops ideas, theories, and understandings. In Reggio Emilia classrooms, there are no checklists of skills, tests, or diagnostic evaluations, because the educators there believe that standardized assessments limit teaching too much by focusing on only a narrow range of what children do, not the whole picture of their strengths and potential. The American research community distinguishes between types of research based on the purposes for which it is conducted. The documentation favored by educators in Reggio Emilia promotes reflective practice and program improvement through

formative methods that help educators better understand their problems, uncover the processes of teaching and learning, and analyze “what works and what does not” on an ongoing basis. It is intended to assist educators to refine and improve their work in process, not to allow outside audiences to understand outcomes and measure impacts over time. Formats and uses of documentation are continually changing as educators incorporate digital technologies that allow them to edit and combine images and share documentation in new ways.

In sum, the Reggio Emilia approach should be understood in the context of other Italian and European innovations in early care and education, as well as the historical context of progressive, child-centered educational models. Most of all, it offers a compelling example of what a city can accomplish when citizens, educators, and government come together to create what the Italians call a “culture of childhood,” that is, a sustained community disposition to promote the educational rights and needs of children as an intrinsic good. *See also* Classroom Environments; Development, Language; Reggio Inspired Teacher Education; Standardized Tests and Early Childhood Education.

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Reggio-Inspired Teacher Education (RITE)

Reggio-inspired teacher education (RITE) is a term used to connote a group of early childhood educators who have been influenced by the work of Loris Malaguzzi and Reggio Emilia. It is also a term used to refer to specific principles and practices of early childhood teacher education in the United States that derive

from this Italian city's municipal early childhood program. As described by its founders, RITE is really both more and less than a method.

Reggio-inspired teacher education, like the work taking place in Reggio Emilia, Italy, is actually best described as an *approach*. It is an approach to the way teachers construct curricula; it is an approach to the way teachers create and re-create the learning environment; it is an approach to the ways teachers collaborate with colleagues, parents, and children; it is an approach to how teachers can come to know the meanings children attribute to their educational experiences; and, it is an approach even to the very organization of the school itself. In other words, teacher educators adhering to RITE principles do not prescribe how these things are done but, rather, offer a perspective from which each of these topics can be considered.

This perspective is defined by six factors. First, the educational process, at any level, is embedded in a socially co-constructed context and as such must be responsive to the interests and needs of all the participants in the process, in particular, children, parents, and teachers (Smith, 2001). Second, children are recognized for their competence rather than for their limits, and as such curricula must be authentic, responsive, and build on this competence (Goldhaber and Goldhaber, 2000; Hull et al., 2002). One of the primary goals of a RITE program is to help new teachers understand the concept of curriculum as an emergent or negotiated experience involving others rather than a preplanned set of teacher-defined activities or lessons. A third critical component has to do with the assessment of children's progress, considered best done through the documentation and collaborative analysis of the products of children's educational investigations. Fourth, the physical and temporal arrangement of the classroom is an essential element in defining children's educational experiences. The environment must be accessible and responsive—the schedule allowing children ample time to become intellectually invested in their work. Fifth, teachers must come to see themselves as researchers and advocates as much, if not more, as they do directors of children's learning. They must be as intellectually engaged in learning as are their children. And sixth, RITE supports the principle that all these factors hold equally at all levels of the educational experience. The approach to preparing teachers and the approach to the organization of a school must be the same as the approach to the operation of a classroom. If the goal of a Reggio Emilia approach to children's education is to support the active intellectual engagement of children in worthwhile learning experiences, then the same set of considerations must equally be applied to the preparation of the teachers who will work with these children and to the organization of the schools in which this work will take place.

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Dale Goldhaber and Jeanne Goldhaber

Research Connections. See Child Care and Early Education *Research Connections*

RITE. See Reggio-Inspired Teacher Education

Rogers, Carl (1902–1987)

Carl Ransom Rogers, an American founder of humanistic psychology, viewed human nature as essentially good. He developed a nondirective psychotherapy known variously as client-centered therapy, the person-centered approach, and person-centered psychotherapy. The phenomenological theory of personality that informed his clinical practice focused on subjective reality; central to subjective reality was the concept of *self*—Rogers' most important construct. He believed that a healthy self-concept would develop only if a person encountered unconditional positive regard, which is essential to achieving self-actualization.

Humanistic psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow advanced the importance of enhancing children's self-esteem during the early years. "All About Me" curriculum units, for example, became very popular in early childhood education during the 1970s in part due to the impact of humanistic ideas. Early childhood practices that encouraged creativity and children's self-expression also flourished during this period because they related to actualizing one's human potential.

Carl Rogers was born on January 8, 1902, in Oak Parks, Illinois. His father, a civil engineer, provided well for the family, although fundamentalist Christian beliefs strictly controlled the Rogers household. When Carl was twelve, his family moved to the country, where he and his five siblings grew up isolated from harmful influences. Socially secluded and devoutly religious, Rogers pursued solitary activities, such as reading, that helped him graduate from high school with superior grades.

Rogers enrolled in 1919 at the University of Wisconsin, where he remained active in the church, hoping eventually to enter the ministry. He completed a BA in history in 1924 and, shortly thereafter, married Helen Elliot, a Wisconsin classmate and childhood friend. The couple subsequently had two children, David in 1926 and Natalie in 1928.

Although Rogers initially attended Union Theological Seminary in New York City, he became increasingly skeptical of religious doctrine. He transferred to Teachers College, Columbia University, to study clinical and educational psychology instead, completing his MA degree in 1928 and PhD in 1931.

Rogers' first professional position as staff psychologist at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Rochester, New York initiated his work with distressed children. The highly successful publication of *Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child* in 1939 led to a faculty appointment in psychology at Ohio State University, a move that launched Rogers' academic career. By 1945, he had become Professor of Psychology and Director of Counseling at the University of Chicago, where he completed his major work, *Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory* (Rogers, 1951).

Rogers returned to the University of Wisconsin in 1957, but, disillusioned with academia, he resigned his position in 1964 to become a resident fellow at the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute in La Jolla, California. In 1968, Rogers accepted a position at the Center for Studies of the Person, where he applied his theory to industry and education. He also became involved in the encounter group movement as a means of facilitating human growth and potential. Throughout his career, Rogers modeled compassion, empathy, and an unflagging commitment to helping others reach their full potential.

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Ann C. Benjamin

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712–1778)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born June 28, 1712, in Geneva, Switzerland, to a mother who died shortly after his birth. Some scholars (e.g., Dent, 2005) believe that this early loss of his mother had a significant effect on his personality and on his idealized form of human relationship, involving a “directness and immediacy he never experienced” (p. 8). At ten years of age, his father, a watchmaker, fled Geneva to avoid prison for a minor offense, leaving young Jean-Jacques to be raised by an uncle who eventually sent him to live with a Protestant pastor who became responsible for his education. Within a few years Rousseau was apprenticed to an engraver (Scholz, 2001). Rousseau left Geneva at sixteen, wandering from place to place, finally moving to Paris in 1742, where he converted to Catholicism. Rousseau earned his living working as a footman, music teacher, tutor, and personal secretary to the French ambassador to Venice.

For much of his adult life Rousseau was considered a brilliant, undisciplined, and unconventional thinker and a poor tutor. He spent much of his adulthood driven by sensuality and paranoia; he also suffered from an enlarged prostate. Rousseau spent his time between Paris and Geneva, writing both essays and music.

Many of the controversies associated with Rousseau's work were due to his unconventional beliefs about love, relationships, and his attempt to live by the

principles he laid out in the *First Discourse*. He frequently initiated bitter quarrels with even supportive colleagues (www.philosophypages.com/ph/rous.htm). Somewhat complicated and ambiguous, Rousseau's general philosophy tried to grasp an emotional and passionate side of man, which he felt was left out of most previous philosophical thinking. In his early writing, Rousseau contended that man is essentially good, a *noble savage* when in the *state of nature* (the state of all the other animals, and the condition man was in before the creation of civilization and society), and that good people are made unhappy and corrupted by their experiences in society. He viewed society as *artificial* and *corrupt* and argued that the furthering of society results in the continuing unhappiness of man (www.lucidcafe.com/library/96jun/rousseau.htm). He minimized the importance of book learning, and recommended that a child's emotions be educated before his reason. He placed a special emphasis on learning by experience.

Rousseau eventually became famous as a French political philosopher and educator, even though he had no formal education. Many writers believe that the beginning of the field of child study as a discipline can be directly traced to the publication of Rousseau's beliefs in *Emile* in 1762. In *Emile*, Rousseau postulates that childhood is natural and a time important in itself, that a child will become increasingly fit to live in the world without adult supervision and direction, and that the child actively engages his environment, using it to suit his own interests. Although banned in France and burned in Geneva, this work was quickly translated into German and English and had a significant impact on practical reforms in educational practice. Some believe *Emile* was the most significant book on education after Plato's *Republic*.

It is somewhat ironic that Rousseau attempted to articulate the program of education that best fosters the true nature of man in his love of self (Scholz, 2001, p. 27), given that he refused to support the five illegitimate children he sired with Thérèse Le Vasseur. All of his children were deposited at the local Foundling Hospital. It is also worth noting that the man who philosophized about social contracts had such a strong personal aversion to social interactions.

In his last years, Rousseau found solace in botany and solitude (Wokler, 1995). He died July 2, 1778, of apoplexy after his usual early morning walk, and an early breakfast, Thérèse at his side. His remains were moved to the Panthéon in Paris in 1794 and placed close to those of Voltaire.

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Michael Kalinowski

Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center (Boston, Massachusetts)

Founded by Abigail Eliot, the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center opened its doors at 147 Ruggles Street, Boston, Massachusetts, in January 1922. After studying at London's Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Training Centre, Eliot founded the school on the premise that young children were not receiving sufficient opportunities for cultural development, and physical and mental health, in the home environment. She also perceived a need for other nursery schools, but with qualified teachers rather than nurses who usually played this role. These initiatives led to a growing interest in training young women in the early childhood profession (Wertlieb, 2005). Started as a project of the Women's Education Association of Boston, 147 Ruggles Street became one of three nursery schools open in the United States; the others were in Detroit and in New York.

Ruggles Street was primarily focused on serving the low-income students; soon, the school became known as a safe educational home for children of all interests, economic backgrounds, and abilities. The school aimed at preparing the students individually and in group settings, working with children between the ages of two through five years. This devotion to educating all individuals became both the school's philosophy and the beginning of a shift in educational thinking in the United States toward a more holistic approach to teaching children.

By 1926, the Training School had grown to capacity, instructing fifty full-time education students. Mrs. Henry Greenleaf Pearson, Director of the Training School since its inception, realized that to continue as a training ground for exceptional early childhood educators, the school needed to expand beyond Ruggles Street. Moving to a double house at 355 Marlborough Street, Boston, the Ruggles Street School became the Nursery Training School of Boston. The school worked to educate students about the dynamics and principles of child development, emphasizing a **Montessori** style of teaching, learning through **play**, and strong parent-child as well as teacher-child relations.

Developing relationships with local universities was crucial to the continued success of the Training School program. In 1930, a reciprocal partnership was developed with the Boston University School of Education. In 1954, the Training School once again increased its connections with the Boston community, becoming affiliated with Tufts University. The Training School became a full department at Tufts University ten years later, renamed as the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study. Today it is known as the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development.

The Ruggles Street Nursery School no longer exists. In its place are the Eliot-Pearson Children's School and the Tufts Educational Day Care Center; each of these reflect new interpretations of the beliefs of Dr. Eliot and Mrs. Pearson. The Training School's idea of incorporating applied developmental research with field-based practicum experiences remains a cornerstone of all affiliates of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development. This emphasis on "learning by doing" for students in the department's teacher education program remains a primary program characteristic—a principle and practice that can be traced back

to the inception of the Ruggles Street Nursery School and Training Center in 1922.

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Sarah A. Leveque

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School-Age Care

During the early school-age years, nonparental care during out-of-school time is a reality for millions of children in the United States. School-age programs provide academic and social activities for young school-age children while in a supervised environment during the hours they are not in school. With its dual role of enrichment and supervision, school-age care serves as a bridge between the nonparental child care arrangements of preschool-age children and the more structured school learning environment.

School-age care takes place during out-of-school hours before or after the regular school day, on school breaks, on weekends, and during the summer. The school-age care field often focuses on organized programs for school-age children in the hours before and after school, although care for school-age children is also provided in family child care settings (by both relatives and nonrelatives) and by in-home providers. Other common terms used to describe such care arrangements include out-of-school time, after-school care, school-age child care, extended day, extended services, expanded learning, and youth development activities.

Interest in and use of school-age care programs in the United States has grown in recent years because of factors such as increased female labor force participation, youth crime and risky behavior prevention efforts, concern that schools are not meeting the educational needs of children, and a decreased sense of supportiveness in the neighborhood environment. According to the National Household Education Surveys Program, 20 percent of Kindergarten through eighth-grade children have nonparental care arrangements before school. Nonparental school-age care is even more common in the hours after school, with estimates based on national samples ranging from 50 to 57 percent of school-age children in such arrangements (Kleiner, Nolin, and Chapman, 2004). A 2003 survey of U.S. households found that although 22 million families wanted after-school care for their children, only 6.5 million were participating, indicating that supply may not be meeting demand (Afterschool Alliance, 2004).

In the after-school hours, the most common type of nonparental arrangement is participation in a school- or community-based after-school program. While reported figures range from 11 to 26 percent, the exact percentage of school-age children using such arrangements varies slightly depending on the survey used and the specific ages and backgrounds of the children included in the sample. According to recent surveys, use is most prevalent among younger school-age children (age six to nine), African American children, children with employed parents, children from higher-income families, and children from single-parent homes. Considerable variation in program utilization also exists depending on state of residence. In a comparison of thirteen different states, participation of low-income children in before- or after-school programs ranged from 6 percent in Wisconsin to 17 percent in New Jersey (Sonenstein et al., 2002).

Other types of common nonparental care arrangements for school-age children include care by a relative or nonrelative adult in a family child care home, an in-home provider (e.g., nanny or babysitter), self care, and extracurricular activities used for supervision. Nearly one third (32%) of Kindergarten through eighth-grade children in nonparental arrangements before and/or after school have more than one arrangement, for example, grandmother care before school and school-age program after school (Kleiner et al., 2004).

After-school programs are typically housed in public schools where large cafeterias and gymnasium spaces, as well as ease in transporting children from school to after school, lend themselves to the operation of such programs. Programs are also found in a wide variety of other settings including child care centers, YMCAs, boys and girls clubs, religious institutions, parks and recreation departments, police athletic leagues, and private schools. There is great heterogeneity in after-school program goals, content, and services. However, most programs are open from 3 to 6 PM for 5 days a week with an average enrollment of 65 children. A typical schedule might include snack, homework time, academic activities (e.g., literacy skills training, mentoring, and tutoring), art activities (e.g., arts and crafts, music, dance, adventure education), recreation activities (e.g., outdoor playgrounds, organized sports), and service learning. Rates of participation are often sporadic, with individual children spending an average of 8 to 10 hours per week in a program (Afterschool Alliance, 2004; Kleiner et al., 2004).

Some evidence suggests that many after-school programs are of mediocre quality. For example, in the Making the Most of Out-of-School Time (MOST) evaluation, two thirds of observed programs were judged to be poor to fair in quality (Halpern, 1999). Quality is often hindered by high staff turnover rates, inadequate space, lack of interaction (or in some cases conflict) between the after-school program and the organization housing the program (e.g., public school). To help address the quality of after-school programs, the National AfterSchool Association (a professional organization with 7,000 members and thirty-six state affiliates) developed quality standards in 1998. These standards include thirty-six "keys of quality" in the areas of human relationships; indoor environment; outdoor environment; activities; safety, health, and nutrition; and administration (Roman, 1998). Using these standards, over 550 programs have been accredited in the United States by the National After-School Association as of April 2006.

Costs and Funding for After-School Programs

Costs for running a program vary tremendously, with estimates ranging from \$700 to \$6,600 annually per child depending on program features such as schedule, staff salaries, program size, and in-kind donations (Halpern et al., 2000). The greatest expense is staff compensation, with costs in this area typically accounting for 65–80 percent of total program operating expenses. Other costs for operating a program include facilities, supplies and equipment, food, capital costs, and infrastructure (including planning and evaluation, program development, licensing, transportation, and technical assistance).

After-school programs are funded through four main sources: parent fees, public money, private funds, and in-kind donations. A large part of funding for after-school programs typically comes from parent fees (15–25% of revenues), especially in more affluent communities. On average, parents pay \$22 per week per child (Afterschool Alliance, 2004).

Federal funds also provide a significant source of revenue for school-age programs. For example, the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, the only federal program solely dedicated to funding after school, often provides funding for the start-up or expansion of after-school programs. Funds from this Department of Education program have increased from \$750,000 in 1995 to just under \$1 billion in FY 2004. The Child Care and Development Fund, administered through the Department of Health and Human Services, also provides funding to states for many after-school programs and represents a potentially sustainable source of funds for many child care programs. Approximately 35 percent of the \$4.6 billion in FY 2003 federal money was spent on school-age children between the ages of 6 and 13. Other sources of federal funds for after-school programs include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (through direct assistance and through transfer of up to 30 percent of funds to state block grants such as the Child Care and Development Fund or Title XX Social Services), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program that provides funding for meals, snacks, and nutrition education for programs serving low-income children.

After-school programs also tap other state, local, and private money to fund their operations. These resources are usually targeted toward direct services such as increasing quality, improving access, or expanding supply, with much smaller provisions made for financing infrastructure (e.g., facilities, professional development, technical assistance). Finally, in-kind contributions can be a significant part of after-school program operations. In-kind donations might include space, utilities, volunteer staff, materials, and tickets to events donated by community organizations (e.g., museums, sports teams).

Outcomes for Children

Research about the impacts of After-School programs on young school-age children has been mixed. A number of studies have demonstrated that participation in these types of programs, particularly those that provide a warm, positive and flexible environment, is associated with better academic grades, social relationships with peers, reading achievement, and emotional adjustment for first- to

third-grade children (Mahoney et al., 2005; Pierce et al., 1999; Posner and Vandell, 1994). Similarly, Lauer and colleagues' meta-analysis examining out-of-school time activities indicates that such programs can have small, but positive, effects on reading and mathematic achievement of at-risk children and youth (Lauer et al., 2004). The largest gains in reading improvement were seen in the youngest children (grades K-2). A national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school programs (including those for elementary and middle school students), however, found little relation between after-school participation and reading test scores, grades, problematic behaviors, goal setting, team work, or numbers of children in self-care (Dynarski et al., 2004). Findings from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care also suggest no relationship between before- and after-school program participation and cognitive and social development in first grade (NICHD Early Care Research Network, 2004).

Critics, including Kane, Mahoney, and Zigler, contend that evaluations of after-school programs to date suffer from methodological flaws that make it difficult to know exactly what impact after-school programs really have on child outcomes. Many evaluations rely on quasi-experimental designs in which no control group is included. The quality and appropriateness of comparison groups also varies from study to study. Results from the national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, despite the use of a strong experimental design using random assignment, have been criticized for other methodological problems including the premature nature of the evaluation (i.e., programs evaluated while still in the early stages of development), cross-over between program and comparison group participants (i.e., comparison group participation in the program), lack of representativeness in the elementary school sites included in the evaluation, lack of data gathered on possible key background and program variables, and reliance on unrealistic outcome measures. Additional research that addresses these methodological challenges is needed to further explore the true impact of school-age program participation on cognitive and social outcomes for children.

After-School Care Providers

After-school care providers include front-line teachers or assistants who work directly with children on a regular basis, as well as center coordinators and directors. Providers tend to work part-time for low wages and few, if any, benefits. These factors, combined with low professional status, a limited career ladder, and lack of a clear professional identity even within the school-age field itself, contribute to the 35-40 percent annual turnover rate.

Currently, no national professional development program exists for training school-age care professionals. Approximately one-half of states in the United States, however, have created or are exploring some form of credentialing for those individuals providing care for school-age children. For example, New York State offers an intensive, in-service credential specifically for school-age staff. Begun in 1998, the NYS School Age Care Credential (NYS SACC) is based on the U.S. Army School Age Care Credential, the first credential created for school-age care providers. The NYS SACC provides standards for training and recognition of staff members based on their ability to meet the unique needs of children aged five

to thirteen. Similar to the Child Development Associate Credential for child care providers who work with children from birth through age five, the SACC process includes coursework, portfolio development, and parent feedback, as well as advisement and observation by knowledgeable school-age care professionals. SACC programs are offered throughout the state by local organizations such as Cornell University Cooperative Extension agencies, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and community colleges. In the first seven years of the NYS SACC, over 250 school-age care staff have been awarded their credentials.

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Lisa McCabe

School Culture

“School culture” is a recognizable set of events (e.g., reading groups), routines (e.g., attendance count), artifacts (e.g., blackboard and chalk), norms and expectations (e.g., raise your hand for a turn to talk), concerns (e.g., standardized test scores), values (e.g., conformity), and roles (e.g., teacher and student) that are

similar, pervasive, and socially constructed in schools throughout the country. Sociologists like Phillip Jackson (1968) recognized the special demands that a “life in school” places on students to use language in certain ways, behave in certain ways, and respond to the “hidden curriculum.” While these sociologists did not use the term *per se*, their notion of schools’ implicit demands to produce particular school behaviors to be successful as a student is the essential meaning of “school culture.”

Judith Green was one of the first educators to look at the classroom with a cultural lens, more specifically with an interactive sociolinguistic and ethnographic perspective. In her prolific career with diverse collaborators, Green (1983) has examined various topics, including **curriculum** construction, language and **literacy** practices, and teacher and student roles, with the basic assumption that daily life in classrooms is socially constructed and negotiated over time in face-to-face interaction.

The notion of school culture was further developed by scholars whose primary interest was in understanding the difficulties experienced by marginalized groups of children in schools. Early on, Shirley Brice Heath (1983) studied the “ways of words” of several diverse communities in the Piedmont Carolinas, and emphasized the highly contextualized nature of communication across different cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic communities. As she followed these groups of children into the school context, the mismatch between their community’s cultural discourse patterns and those of the school became apparent. This mismatch established the idea that particular discourse patterns characterized school and might create an obstacle to participation, and thus achievement, for particular groups of children.

This insight was buttressed with a major finding from literacy researchers—that children socialized in diverse contexts come to school differentially prepared to respond to the demands of school culture (Jacobs and Jordan, 1993). Building upon Heath’s seminal work, many scholars with multicultural and diversity interests have sharpened our understanding of the essentially middle-class nature of school discourse and literacy practices, and the challenge, therefore, to diverse learners, whose experiences at home do not provide an easy match with school (Delpit, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll, 1992; Finn, 1999). Furthermore, Scribner and Cole (1981) established the idea that there are multiple forms of literacy, including specialized forms of reading and writing, both in school and out. Researchers interested in the school context have focused on what has been called variously “school-based literacy” (Pellegrini, 2001), “schooled literacy” (Bloome, 1987), the “official” (versus the “unofficial”) literacy practices found in school (Dyson, 1993), and “school culture literacy” (Kantor, Miller, and Fernie, 1992). Common across these terms are the notions that literacy practices are shaped by school culture in particular ways that reflect middle class-literacy, that school-based literacy is a specific variety of literacy that must be taught and learned by all students, and that it will be easier for those whose home experiences are seamless with the school context.

Understanding and accepting the power of the school culture context to shape and constrain school success reframes the discourse around many familiar topics, such as school **readiness**, **assessment**, culturally relevant pedagogy, and discipline

and guidance. The idea that school culture is a relative term begs the question of the appropriate role for schools in supporting childhood socialization and the needs of diverse learners. Among the questions facing early childhood educators are how best to support various students as they come to school, and how—or if—teachers ought to change their **pedagogy** and curricula to help diverse students instead of requiring students to change in order to meet the requirements of the school-based context? Some propose that the primary challenge for schools is to expand the school culture so that it supports students and their families cross the bridge from home to school and become socially “bicultural” in the ways of their communities and their schools.

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SECA. See Southern Early Childhood Association

Second-Language Acquisition in Early Childhood

All children are born ready to learn language to communicate with the significant people in their lives. Within the first few years of life, virtually all typically developing children master the basics of one language. Although this is a complex task that requires much effort, early language proficiency is expected and considered normal. Increasingly, in the United States, young children are in learning environments where more than one language is used. Internationally, it is estimated that there are as many children who grow up learning two languages as there are learning one. The number of children enrolled in preschool and Head Start programs whose home language is not English (English-language learners, ELL) has been steadily increasing over the past two decades. During the 2002–2003 program year, 27 percent of children enrolled in Head Start did not speak

English as their home language. Of these, the vast majority are from Spanish-speaking homes, with 139 other language groups also reported. There are now more Latinos (almost 40 million) than African Americans (almost 39 million) or any other ethnic group and they represent about 14 percent of the total population in the nation. Owing to immigration trends and child-bearing rates of Latina women, the number of Latino children as a proportion of all young children has also been steadily increasing. Currently, Hispanics make up about 26 percent of all children under the age of three.

Throughout the United States, the academic achievement levels, high school completion rates, and college attendance rates of English-language learners remain markedly below that of their white, English-speaking peers. These findings have led some to believe that second-language acquisition places children at risk for school success. Countering this concern is a growing and convincing body of research emphasizing that high-quality early childhood education can improve the educational achievement of children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and help to reduce this achievement gap before kindergarten. Therefore, it is important for the early childhood profession to have a clear understanding of how children acquire a second language in order to design high-quality learning environments for children who are in the process of acquiring English as their second language.

Will Two Languages Help or Hurt Young Children?

Research increasingly shows that most young children are not only capable of learning two languages, but that bilingualism confers cognitive, cultural, and economic advantages (Bialystok, 2001; Genesee, 2004; Hakuta and Pease-Alvarez, 1992). Bilingualism has been associated with a greater awareness of and sensitivity to linguistic structure, an awareness that is transferred and generalized to certain early literacy and nonverbal skills. There are several important implications of this research for early childhood professionals. Children who have the opportunity to speak two languages should be encouraged to maintain both, so they can enjoy the benefits that may accompany bilingual status. Children from homes where English is not the native language should be encouraged to cultivate their home language as well as English. Maintaining the home language is essential not just to the child's future academic and cognitive development, but also to the child's ability to establish a strong cultural identity, to develop and sustain strong ties with their immediate and extended families, and to thrive in a global, multilingual world.

How Do Children Learn a Second Language?

It is commonly assumed that preschool-aged children can just "pick up" a second language without much effort or systematic teaching. However, becoming proficient in a language is a complex and demanding process that takes many years. As with any type of learning, children will vary enormously in the rate at which they learn a first and a second language. The speed of language acquisition is due to factors both within the child and in the child's learning environment.

The child's personality, aptitude for languages, interest and motivation interact with the quantity and quality of language inputs and opportunities for use to influence the rate and eventual fluency levels.

Simultaneous vs. Sequential Second Language Acquisition

Barry McLaughlin (1984, 1995) has made a distinction between children who learn a second language *simultaneously* or *sequentially*. When a child learns two languages *simultaneously*, for example, before three years of age, the developmental pathway is similar to how monolingual children acquire language. However, there is some disagreement in the literature over whether bilingualism results in a slower rate of vocabulary development than when children are learning a single language. As children are in the process of acquiring two languages and becoming bilingual, one language may dominate. That is normal. It is rare for emerging bilinguals to be equally balanced in the development of both languages. Eventually, however, children who have the opportunity to acquire two languages simultaneously will become proficient in each language.

The language development of children who learn a second language after three years of age, or *sequentially*, follows a different progression and is highly sensitive to characteristics of the child as well as the language learning environment. At this point, the basics of the child's first language have been learned. They know the structure of one language, but now must learn the specific features, grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, of a new language. According to Tabors and Snow (1994), *sequential* second language acquisition follows a four-stage developmental sequence:

1. *Home Language Use*. When a child has become competent in one language and is introduced into a setting where everyone is speaking a different language, for example, an ELL entering an English-dominant preschool classroom, the child will frequently continue to speak his home language even when others do not understand. This period can be short or in some cases the child will persist in trying to get others to understand him for months.
2. *Nonverbal Period*. After young children realize that speaking their home language will not work, they enter a period where they rarely speak and use nonverbal means to communicate. This is a period of active language learning for the child; he is busy learning the features, sounds, and words of the new language (receptive language) but is not yet verbally using the new language to communicate. This is an extremely important stage of second language learning that may also last a long time or be brief. Any language assessments conducted during this stage of development may result in misleading information that underestimates the child's true language capacity.
3. *Telegraphic and Formulaic Speech*. The child is now ready to start using the new language and does so through telegraphic speech that involves the use of formulas. This is similar to a monolingual child who is learning simple words or phrases (content words) to express whole thoughts. For instance, a child might say "me down" indicating he wants to go downstairs. Formulaic speech refers to unanalyzed chunks of words or sometimes even syllables strung together that are

repetitions of what the child has heard. For example, Tabors (1997) reports that ELLs in the preschool she studied frequently used the phrase “Lookit” to engage others in their play. These are phrases the children had heard from others that helped to achieve their social goals, even though the children probably did not know the meaning of the two words.

4. *Productive Language*. Now the child is starting to go beyond telegraphic or formulaic utterances to create their own phrases and thoughts. Initially the child may use very simple grammatical patterns such as “I wanna play,” but over time he will gain control over the structure and vocabulary of the new language. Errors in language usage are common during this period as children are experimenting with their new language and learning its rules and structure.
5. As with any developmental sequence, the stages are flexible and not mutually exclusive. McLaughlin and his colleagues (McLaughlin et al., 1995) preferred to describe the process as waves, “moving in and out, generally moving in one direction, but receding, then moving forward again” (pp. 3–4).

Sequential bilingual children may have somewhat different patterns of development than monolinguals in certain aspects of language development in the short term. This may include vocabulary, early literacy skills, and interpersonal communication. Young ELLs frequently know fewer vocabulary words in both English and their home language than monolingual children. This may be due to the limited memory capacity of young children or limited exposure to a rich and varied vocabulary. If they speak one language in the home and are learning English at preschool, the child may also know some words in one language and not the other. For instance, the child may have learned the English words *recess*, *chalk*, *line*, etc., at school, but never learned the corresponding words in Spanish because there was no need or opportunity to do so in the home. However, when the total number of words the child knows in both languages is considered together, it is comparable to the number and range of vocabulary words monolingual children know.

Code Switching/Language Mixing

It is important for early childhood educators to understand that *code switching* (switching languages for portions of a sentence) and *language mixing* (inserting single items from one language into another) are normal aspects of second language acquisition. This does not mean that the child is confused or cannot separate the languages. The main reason that children mix the two languages in one communication is because they lack sufficient vocabulary in one or both languages to fully express themselves. Research has shown that even proficient adult bilinguals mix their languages in order to convey special emphasis or establish cultural identity. In any case, code switching or language mixing is a normal and natural part of second language acquisition that parents and teachers should not be concerned about. The goal must always be on enhancing communication, rather than enforcing rigid rules about which language can be used at a given time or under certain circumstances.

Summary

Young children who have regular and rich exposure to two languages during the early childhood years can successfully become bilingual. Most research concludes that there are no negative effects of bilingualism on the linguistic, cognitive, or social development of children, and there may even be some general advantages in these areas of development. Simultaneous bilingualism follows a path similar to monolingual development; sequential second language acquisition occurs in a predictable series of stages or waves. Typically, at any given time, one language may dominate depending on the amount of time spent in each language. As early childhood programs become increasingly diverse, teachers will need to understand the process of second language acquisition and learn how to adapt their expectations and instruction accordingly. Increased understanding will lead to improved methods that will promote the learning and achievement of young children who are learning English as a second language.

A major implication of the increasing proportion of young children who are ELL is the composition and preparation of the early childhood workforce. All staff, teachers, support staff, and administrators will need to understand the developmental characteristics of dual language learners, effective instructional and assessment practices, and, most critically, the role of first and second language proficiency in long-term academic success. Ideally, the workforce will include professionals who are proficient in English as well as the children's home language and well trained in early childhood pedagogy. In order to realize the potential of early bilingualism, we will need highly skilled teachers who have achieved proficiency in bilingualism, multicultural perspectives, and effective teaching strategies. *See also* Bilingual Education; Development, Language; Language Diversity.

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Self-Esteem and Self-Concept

Self-concept and self-esteem are considered important to children's development and education. These two terms are often mistakenly used interchangeably, yet they are in many ways inextricably intertwined. *Self-concept* is a broad category, of which *self-esteem* is a component. Self-concept refers to the perceptions, feelings, and attitudes that a person has about himself or herself. Self-concept includes how individuals see their personal characteristics such as empathy and caring, their moral virtues, their gender, ethnic, and religious identity, and their physical appearance and social power. Self-concept encompasses one's sense of competence in gradually differentiated domains such as cognitive, social, and physical realms. This sense of competence contributes to self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to the evaluations individuals make about themselves and encompasses their judgments about their self-worth. Self-esteem is thus an integral part of one's self-concept.

Although we often refer to a general level of self-esteem, on closer inspection, self-esteem may vary according to domain. For example, children may have high self-esteem based on their social skills and circle of friends, but they may have low self-esteem in academic or physical domains. Even more specifically, children may feel good about their reading ability, but have lower self-evaluations regarding their math ability. Low self-esteem in one domain, such as athletic ability, may have little effect on an individual if it is not considered important in a particular family, peer group, or culture. On the other hand, in families or cultures where athletic skills are important or where skills that underpin academic ability are highly valued, low self-esteem in these relevant areas may have increasingly devastating effects as children move through school.

Factors Affecting the Development of Self-Esteem and Self-Concept

The development of self-concept and self-esteem are influenced by a variety of factors. These include cultural values, the social context and significant others, the physical environment and opportunities to acquire skills and abilities as well as the individual's physical appearance. Parents' and teachers' expectations also contribute to the development of self-concept and self-esteem.

Views of self vary among cultures, subcultures, and families within cultures. Self-esteem and self-concept are affected by possessing culturally valued traits, such as striving or helpfulness. In Western cultures, one goal is to help children become more independent and to achieve—particularly in academic or athletic domains. In contrast to the importance of becoming independent and achieving for oneself, in some cultures and families, connectedness and relationships with family and community are more salient. For some, self-concept and self-esteem are based more on seeing oneself as a part of a web of relevant social relationships than on seeing oneself as unique. In some cultures, self-esteem may be based more on harmony, on fitting in with a relevant group, and on caring than on excelling and being competitive. These two contrasting views of cultural influences should not be taken as polar opposites, however. An alternative view of the self is possible wherein both autonomy and interdependence are important to varying degrees depending on the circumstances.

Self-concept and self-esteem develop largely within a social context. The interpersonal environment that caregivers provide influences the development of self-concept and self-esteem. The quality, consistency, and timing of adults' responses to infants may carry messages about trust, caring, and the value of the infant. Caregiver responsiveness may also convey information about young children's capacity to become competent and to control their environment. When caregivers respond positively and consistently to infants' cues, infants may come to learn that they are of value and that they can influence their social environment. This may contribute to beginning feelings of self-worth and competence.

Parental warmth, acceptance, and especially approval are associated with higher levels of self-esteem as children get older. The type and quality of parenting also affects self-esteem. Parents who make reasonable demands that are accepted by children, but who do not impose unreasonable restrictions and who allow their children some choice and control (often termed authoritative parenting), generally have children with higher self-esteem than parents who are authoritarian or permissive—at least in mainstream Western cultures. Consequently, training in effective parenting where parents learn to be more accepting of their children's feelings and behaviors may result in higher self-esteem for their children. On the other hand, what some view as authoritarian parenting may in other cultures be perceived as caring and loving and may, therefore, have beneficial effects on feelings of esteem in those cultures (Chao, 1994). Indeed, some researchers suggest that the construct of self-esteem is a particularly Western attribute.

Interestingly, regardless of gender, perceived physical attractiveness—even more than actual physical attractiveness—has been found to be the domain most highly correlated with self-esteem from early childhood onward. Furthermore, adults have been found to give more positive attention to physically attractive infants and toddlers than to those deemed to be less physically attractive.

The physical environment also contributes to self-concept and self-esteem. As children grow older, their self-esteem may increase if they are able to interact successfully with developmentally appropriate materials that provide a challenge within an encouraging environment. Their successful interaction with appropriately challenging materials as well as with supportive adults and peers allows for perceptions of competence and consequently enhanced self-esteem.

Parents' and teachers' expectations are likely to influence the development of children's self-esteem as well. The provision of materials and activities for children to learn and master new tasks not only provides opportunities for them to see themselves as competent but also conveys subtle clues about adults' expectations. Children who see that they are given less challenging materials than others may wonder whether adults do not expect them to succeed. They may suffer self-esteem decrements as a result. Although young children generally hold higher expectations for themselves than do their teachers, when teachers make their evaluations salient, such as pointing out children whose work is best, children's self-evaluations are more likely to reflect those of their teachers. In such an environment, children whose work is not praised or displayed may come to feel unworthy. Furthermore, teaching strategies, such as ability grouping and public comparison of children's work, also subtly reveal teacher expectations and often result in changes to children's perceptions of self-worth. Teachers' expectations and comments about children's qualities, such as kindness, helpfulness, and

flexibility, as well as those about tangible successes, such as art projects or learning to read, also influence children's perceptions of their competence and self-worth.

In addition, learning academic and social skills so that children feel competent is likely to contribute to enhancing children's self-esteem. Evidence that teachers value all the cultures and families from which their children come also helps children feel worthy.

Effects of Self-Esteem and Self-Concept

Research suggests that both self-concept and self-esteem are related to how a child approaches a task. For example, children who see themselves as competent may approach tasks eagerly. In contrast, children whose self-esteem is less robust may shy away from approaching new tasks, events, or people. They become frustrated easily and see themselves as helpless. Consequently, self-esteem and self-concept have implications for motivation and learning—even for preschoolers as young as age two. Children will choose to engage in activities that make them feel worthy.

Self-Esteem Enhancement

Parents and teachers in a number of cultures often attempt to enhance children's self-esteem by praising them, though what is praised often varies. Several cautions are in order here. First, praising children's *ability* and telling them how smart they are may have devastating effects when they do not succeed. For children whose ability is praised, lack of success at a task is likely to make them question their ability and make them feel they are incompetent and unworthy. On the other hand, praising children's *effort* or the strategies they use rather than praising their ability has more positive long-term consequences for maintaining their persistence and consequently their self-esteem. In fact, Japanese children are more commonly praised for effort and are more likely to persevere. Children can modify their strategies and level of effort, whereas ability is something they cannot control. Second, what adults often overlook is that praise may make children dependent on adults for judgments about their self-worth. When this happens, children's self-esteem may suffer since they do not learn to judge their merits on their own. Third, sometimes when praise is used in a manipulative manner—as it is often done in American classrooms, to call attention to children who are doing what they are supposed to do, like waiting quietly—the praised child may feel embarrassed, negatively affecting self-esteem. Teachers who express sincere appreciation of children's positive qualities, such as helpfulness, persistence, interest or curiosity and who expand on these qualities are more likely to strengthen positive self-feelings.

In the United States, at least, many attempts have been made to develop educational programs to enhance self-esteem. Advocates for such programs have argued that by increasing self-esteem, children will be more likely to approach new tasks and learn better. Others have argued that acquiring the skills and abilities that are important within the culture enhances one's self-esteem and that therefore programs aimed specifically at improving self-esteem are unnecessary. They argue further that an overemphasis on self-esteem enhancement may divert time and

attention from teaching important skills and abilities on which realistic self-esteem is based. Indeed, programs based on developing cognitive skills in domains of importance have been found to be more effective in increasing self-esteem than those that focus mainly on self-esteem enhancement.

Because the approval of significant others is highly correlated with high self-esteem, some have suggested that significant others be helped to find ways to demonstrate their approval or that other figures be found who can provide needed support. However, as noted above, effusive praise is likely to be counterproductive compared to recognition of genuine achievement or salient inner qualities.

In Western cultures, another way of enhancing self-esteem is to provide opportunities for self-direction as children mature. Children can be helped to expand their sense of participation and their sense of control and power over problems that they see in the larger environment. For example, children can be helped to take small steps toward overcoming prejudice, waste, poverty, and so on. The ensuing sense of accomplishment in areas of consequence are likely to influence children's sense of competence and their resultant self-esteem.

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Hermine Marshall

Sensory Integration. See Sensory Processing Disorder

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)

Sensory processing (also known as sensory integration) is the normal neurological process of organizing sensations for our use in everyday life. We use sensations to survive, to satisfy our desires, to learn, and to function smoothly. Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), also called Sensory Integration Dysfunction, occurs when the brain inefficiently processes sensory messages coming from a person's own body and his or her environment. The person has difficulty responding in an adaptive way to everyday sensations that others hardly notice or simply take in their stride. These preschoolers described below all have SPD.

Darwin, 4, shrinks away from touch sensations, and his feet never leave the ground; he is a sensory avoider. Eddie, 3^{1/2}, needs sensory stimulation to get up and go but does not usually know how to go get it; he is a sensory disregarder. Ben, 3, constantly seeks all kinds of stimuli; he is a sensory craver. Andy, 4^{1/2}, has trouble differentiating between hot and cold, heavy and light, and other sensations; he is a sensory jumbler. Carrie, 5, with poor posture and no "oomph," is extraordinarily clumsy; she is a sensory fumbler.

Typically, the brain receives sensory information from the body and surroundings; interprets these messages; and organizes purposeful responses. As we climb the stairs, our brain senses that we're moving upward, forward, and from side to side. Usually without conscious effort, we make adaptive responses. We flex and extend our legs, alternate our feet, slide our hand along the banister, maintain our balance, keep upright, and watch where we are going. We are probably not even aware that our bodies are making these adjustments.

In addition to vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch, we have several other vital senses. According to the research of A. Jean Ayres, PhD, OTR, who formulated the theory of sensory processing, the fundamental sensory systems include the following:

1. The *tactile* sense, which provides information, primarily through the surface of our skin, from head to toe, about the texture, shape, and size of objects in the environment. It tells us whether we are actively touching something or are passively being touched. It helps us distinguish between threatening and nonthreatening touch sensations.
2. The *vestibular* sense, which provides information through the inner ear about gravity and space, about balance and movement, and about our head and body position in relation to the surface of the earth.
3. The *proprioceptive* sense, which provides information through our muscles and joints about where our body parts are, how they are stretching, and what they are doing.

These sensory systems develop prenatally. They interact with vision and hearing, smelling and tasting, which develop slightly later. As a result of typical sensory processing, self-control, self-esteem, motor skills, and higher-level cognitive functions can develop.

Sensory Processing Is Necessary for These Everyday Functions:

Academic skills	Hand preference
Attention	Healthy relationships with others
Auditory perception	Kinesthesia
Balance	Muscle tone
Bilateral coordination	Postural stability
Body awareness	Praxis,* including motor planning
Body position	Self-comforting
Emotional security	Self-esteem
Eye-foot coordination	Self-protection
Eye-hand coordination	Self-regulation
Fine-motor skills	Social skills
Flexibility	Speech and language skills
Force, or Grading of movement	Tactile discrimination
Gravitational security	Visualization
Gross-motor skills	Visual discrimination

*Praxis: the ability to conceptualize (or "ideate"), to plan and organize, and to carry out a sequence of unfamiliar actions; to do what one needs and wants to do in order to interact successfully with the physical environment.

Difficulty in these areas may be caused by sensory processing disorder. Generally, the red flags of SPD are unusual responses to tactile, vestibular, and proprioceptive sensations—the sensations of touching and being touched, of moving and being moved. The senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting may be involved, too.

Sensory processing disorder plays out differently from person to person. It can also vary in the same person from day to day, depending on factors such as fatigue, emotional distress, or hunger. It may coexist with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Asperger syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, fragile X, spina bifida, pervasive developmental delay (PDD), nonverbal learning disorder, bipolar disorder, and other problems. Sometimes SPD is severe, sometimes mild.

The child who avoids ordinary sensations or seeks excessive stimulation, whose body is uncooperative, whose behavior is difficult, and who doesn't "fit in" might be called an out-of-sync child. The out-of-sync child receives sensory information just like everybody else. He, too, receives tactile sensations about the clothes touching his skin. He, too, gets movement sensations on a playground swing. He, too, hears a dog bark, smells a banana, chews toast and sees people coming and going. But unlike most people, the child may misinterpret or be unable to use that information effectively. For instance, he may have a tantrum because the tag in his shirt scratches his skin—or, he may not notice that his pants are on backwards. He may feel seasick swinging for a few seconds—or persist in swinging for a "million minutes." He may panic when the dog barks a greeting—or ignore the dog's eagerness to knock him down. He may gag at food smells and textures—or cram all sorts of things, edible or not, into his mouth. He may shrink from visual stimulation such as flashing neon lights—or ignore the sight of rushing cars and run heedlessly into the street. Why is this child out of sync? The underlying problem may be one or more patterns of dysfunction.

1. If the child has *Sensory Modulation Dysfunction* (SMD), his reactions to stimuli may be out of sync because, deep inside, his central nervous system organizes and regulates them inaccurately. These physiological reactions are internal, unconscious—and out of the child's control. While what happens in his brain is invisible, his responses may be frequent, intense, long-lasting, and very noticeable, indeed.

One way this ineffective processing plays out is that the child like Darwin may be overresponsive, or "sensory defensive," to certain sensory stimuli. For example, a door clicking shut may sound too loud; a shimmering Christmas tree may look too bright; a rising elevator may move too fast; an elastic waistband may feel too tight. Usually, the overresponsive child is a sensory-avoider and tends to be either fearful and cautious, or negative and defiant.

Another way that out-of-sync processing plays out is that the child like Eddie may be underresponsive to certain sensory stimuli. He may be difficult to arouse or may withdraw from the scene because he does not know what to do. Sensations do not bother this sensory disregarder; they just do not seem to attract his attention.

A third outcome of SMD is that the child like Ben may be a sensory craver and constantly seek intense sensations, such as spinning, jumping, twirling, climbing, stuffing his mouth, turning up the volume, bumping and crashing into furniture and other people.

Another child with SMD may have a combination of over- and underresponsiveness to stimuli. This sensory fluctuator may avoid some stimuli, such as light, unexpected touch sensations, while craving other stimuli, such as intense proprioceptive and vestibular experiences.

2. If the child has *sensory discrimination dysfunction*, like Andy, he has difficulty differentiating among and between stimuli. His central nervous system inaccurately processes sensations, with the result that he cannot use the information to make purposeful, adaptive responses and get on with the day.

The child misgauges the significance and value of things. He may not “get” sensory messages that other children use to protect themselves, to learn about their world, and to relate successfully to other people. Is this an eraser—or a cookie? A snap—or a button? How hot is this birthday candle? How high is the curb? How loud is his voice? How full is his mouth? How full is his cup? How hard should he pedal? How soon should he brake? How low should he duck? How much force is he using to hold a pencil, draw with a crayon, change a doll’s outfit, add blocks to a structure, kick a ball, stroke a kitten, or lean on a friend? For the child with poor sensory discrimination, interpreting such ordinary demands and responding appropriately may require enormous effort.

3. If the child like Carrie has *postural disorder* and/or *dyspraxia*—that is, dysfunction in praxis—she has difficulty conceiving of, planning, organizing, and carrying out a sequence of unfamiliar actions. Dyspraxia interferes with doing what one needs and wants to do to interact successfully with the physical environment. (The dyspraxic child often has poor sensory modulation and poor sensory discrimination, too.)

Performing unfamiliar actions is difficult for the dyspraxic child, and successfully going through all the steps of a familiar action may be difficult, as well. Getting dressed, pouring milk into the cereal bowl, climbing into the school bus, and opening her locker may be hard. Sharpening a pencil, putting papers in a three-ring binder, and organizing the steps to write a book report may be daunting. Tying shoes, kicking balls, and skipping . . . making a sandwich and setting the table . . . saying vocabulary words . . . going after school to a new friend’s house—all these undertakings may be troublesome, indeed. Struggling to keep up with other children can be discouraging and not much fun.

Sensory processing disorder is a complex problem. Unfortunately, children don’t grow out of it; they grow into it, finding compensatory ways to cope with confusing, unpredictable, and threatening sensations. SPD may affect children’s development, behavior, learning, communication skills, friendships, and play. It may affect one or all of their sensory systems and impede sensory-related skills needed for daily functioning. It may make children overly self-protective, or not self-protective enough. Their strongest sense may be a sense of uncertainty.

Sensory integration therapy. A child with SPD needs extra coping assistance. Sensory integration-based occupational therapy (“OT/SI”) is highly recommended. Occupational therapy is the use of purposeful activity to maximize the independence and health of people with various physical, cognitive, psychosocial, or developmental needs. For a child, purposeful activities include swinging, climbing, jumping, buttoning, drawing, and writing—the child’s “occupation.” Other therapies are beneficial also, as increasing numbers of pediatric therapists receive added training in sensory integration theory and treatment. Therapy may take place at school, in a clinic, hospital, community health center, or home.

Under the guidance of a sensory integration-trained therapist, the child actively takes in movement and touch information in playful, meaningful, and natural ways. The child responds favorably to sensory integration treatment because it helps him learn to succeed—and he *loves* it!

Sensory-motor activities at home and school. Meanwhile, what can parents, teachers, and others do to help a child get in sync? At home and school, adults can incorporate sensory experiences into the day, as a “sensory diet.” A balanced sensory diet, like a fitness plan, is a planned and scheduled activity program that a therapist develops to meet the needs of a specific child’s nervous system. Its purpose is to help the child become better regulated and more focused, adaptable, and skillful.

A sensory diet includes a combination of activities. An alerting or calming activity may come first, depending on the child’s needs.

Alerting activities help the child become effectively aroused:

- Crunching cereal, popcorn, nuts, pretzels, carrots, celery, apples, or ice cubes
- Bouncing on a therapy ball or beach ball
- Jumping on a mattress or trampoline

Organizing activities help regulate the child’s responses:

- Chewing gum, granola bars, dried fruit, or bagels
- Hanging from a chinning bar
- Pushing, pulling, lifting or carrying heavy loads
- Getting into an upside-down position

Calming activities help decrease sensory overresponsivity or over-stimulation:

- Sucking a pacifier, hard candy, frozen fruit bar, or spoonful of peanut butter
- Pushing against walls with the hands, shoulders, back, buttocks, and head
- Rocking, swaying, or swinging slowly to and fro
- Cuddling or back rubbing
- Taking a bath or playing in water

At school, the child with SPD needs understanding and support to succeed. A teacher may want to help an out-of-sync student but lack training in the appropriate techniques. If so, the following suggestions may help:

- Reduce sensory overload
- Provide comfortable furniture
- Develop a consistent routine
- Plan transitions as carefully as lessons
- Inject movement breaks between and during activities
- Encourage students to be active rather than passive learners

- Give children plenty of time to answer or complete assignments
- Simplify instructions
- Give the child alternatives
- Emphasize the positive
- Provide physical feedback, with frequent “bear hugs” for soothing deep pressure

When the out-of-sync child begins to feel more in control, his schoolwork and social skills will improve. When he is less distracted, he distracts the other children less. Inclusive classrooms that have the support of **early childhood special education** professionals enhance the likelihood that all students are working to their best ability, and that teachers can teach.

Indeed, at home and school, every child benefits from a safe, calm, and distraction-free environment. Every child requires frequent breaks from work to move and stretch. Every child needs to know that someone is paying attention to his strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, ups and downs. Every child needs to be shown how to find solutions to problems. Every child needs assurance that his ideas have merit and that it’s okay to have differing abilities. *See also* Inclusion.

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Carol Kranowitz

SES. *See* Socioeconomic Status

Sex and Sexuality in Young Children

The story of sex and early childhood education is the story of its disappearance. These days, when sexuality is discussed in early childhood educational settings, it is most often in the context of danger and the need to protect children from sexual abuse and preschool teachers and directors from allegations of abuse. It has not always been this way. It need not be this way. And, many believe, it should not be this way.

Sex is an important topic for early childhood education because young children are sexual in the following four ways:

1. *Infantile sexual desires and interests.* One of Sigmund Freud’s most important contributions was to expand our understanding of sex from something that starts at puberty and involves only the genitals to a lifelong process of bodily

pleasures, attractions to others, and emotional attachments. Freud generally used the term *libido* rather than sex to refer to these feelings, desires, and attachments and he suggested that the libido is a force of energy that flows within us from the day we are born (indeed, if not earlier, for even in the womb a fetus can be observed sucking his or her thumb). For Freud, thumb sucking and more generally the pleasures associated with the mouth are the first stage of sexuality, a stage he called the oral stage. Freud suggested that as the child matures the oral stage is followed by the anal stage, which is a period from about the ages of two to four when children take a great interest in urination and defecation and bodily control. Next comes the oedipal or genital stage that begins around four years of age when children become interested in their own and each others' genitals, in the differences between the sexes, and with couples and romance, including the questions of what goes on between their parents, where babies come from, and who they will one day marry.

A century or so ago, when Freud was writing, these psychoanalytic ideas had a great influence on the field of early childhood education. In books for teachers and parents published in the first half of the twentieth century, Freud's work was often cited to encourage parents and teachers of young children to view children's sexual behaviors, interests, and questions as normal and healthy and to avoid repressive responses to young children's fledgling expressions of sexual curiosity. For example, in her 1920 book, *Nursery School Education*, Miss Grace Owen wrote as follows:

What numbers of children have their development impeded and their tempers spoiled by their mothers' over-anxiety about furniture and clothes and respectability! We are just beginning to realize, largely through the work of Jung and Freud and other psychoanalysts, how great is the danger of the repression of the instincts and appetites—the dynamic forces of the mind. . . . What the nursery school teacher can do is to prevent unnatural repression of primitive impulses. . . . The morality of a civilized community must not be imposed on the child by the wholesale suppression of his natural instincts. (pp. 6, 53)

In the twenty-first-century early childhood setting, adults routinely monitor and restrict what Miss Owen considered children's "natural instincts." Today, four- and five-year-old children are vulnerable to accusations of sexually abusing their classmates. Kissing games and playing doctor, common activities of young children just a generation ago, are now activities that routinely lead to calls home, official reports, suspensions and, in rare cases, legal proceedings.

2. *Gender Formation.* By the 1950s, Freud's influence had receded in early childhood education as Freud's focus on the stages of young children's sexuality was replaced by Erik Erickson's emphasis on the stages of the development of identity. For Erikson, a key dimension of what he called the quest for autonomy, initiative, and intimacy in young children is the formation of a gendered identity, an understanding of oneself as male or female. Erikson's influential book *Childhood and Society* (1950), which used to be a required reading for preservice early childhood educators, not only described what he called the "psychosexual

stages,” but also presented case studies of young boys and girls who were struggling with problems of sexuality and gender. In the 1970s, the women’s movement’s focus on the formation of femininity under patriarchy led progressive early childhood educators to turn their attention to preschool classrooms as sites of gender formation. Teachers were warned of the dangers of sexism in the curriculum, and of the tendency to consciously or unconsciously pressure boys and girls to play out rigid, traditional notions of femininity and masculinity as, for example, in play in the housekeeping corner where only girls play at cooking and cleaning while only boys pretend to be firefighters, cowboys, and astronauts.

In recent writings, especially by reconceptualist scholars, concerns about sexism have expanded to include heteronormativity, a term used to describe the pressure put on us all, beginning with young children, to assume that the only normal family formation is one with a mother and father living in the same household and that the primary goal of life should be marriage with someone of the opposite sex (see Boldt, 1997).

3. *Embodiment.* Writing some fifty years ago, Jean Piaget taught us that preschool-aged children are in the sensory-motor stage, by which he meant that their primary way of thinking about and interacting with the world is through their bodies. Before we begin to think abstractly, only in our heads, we think concretely, by connecting what we are thinking about to what we are seeing and touching. Before we begin to think concretely, which happens around age six, we think through and with our bodies. Even though Piaget’s project centered on **cognitive development**, his work taught early childhood educators to appreciate the importance of children’s physicality. This emphasis reinforced the focus on movement, the senses, and the body that formed the beginnings of early childhood education in the work of Friedrich Froebel.

It is ironic that a field that has focused so closely on the importance of the body has recently shifted dramatically to an overemphasis on the mind, often to the detriment of the body. **No Child Left Behind** and **Brain Development** are used to justify more time spent on learning letters and less time on movement, more time in the classroom and less time on the **playground**, and more time sitting in front of computers and less time engaging in physical contact with others, of either the affectionate or rough-and-tumble variety. From a psychoanalytic point of view, this movement away from the body to the mind constitutes an unwise, unhealthy retreat from sexuality, broadly defined—a retreat contemporary feminist psychoanalytic writers call “disembodiment” (cf. Elizabeth Grosz, 1994).

4. *Sexual Danger.* There is now and presumably always has been **sexual abuse** of young children. This is a terrible thing, a far too common thing, but contrary to popular fears, not something that happens very often in early childhood education settings. Research suggests that the sexual abuse of children happens mostly at home, perpetrated mostly by family members, mothers’ boyfriends, and, less often, neighbors. There are very few proven cases of the sexual abuse of children in early childhood education and care settings. And yet a few high-profile cases (e.g., the notorious McMartin case), based on allegations that turned out to have little or no basis in reality, have created the public misperception that young children are vulnerable to sexual abuse in preschools. While some families are likely reassured by the subsequent focus on finger-printing preschool teachers

and creating and enforcing rules about “safe touch” and “no touch” policies in early childhood education settings, others believe that such policies have had counterproductive effects on the lives of young children and the people who care for and educate them. Some blame this heightened focus on preventing sexual abuse in preschools on a society unwilling or unable to prevent the sexual abuse of young children in the home, where it actually occurs. Others point to a more pervasive problem in contemporary American society, not just of sexual abuse of young children but more generally of their hypersexualization, as can be seen, for example, in “Little Miss” beauty pageants, advertising, and internet pornography sites that turn children into objects of sexual desire.

Conclusion

Early childhood professionals have an ethical responsibility to advocate for policies that keep young children safe. In our zeal to protect young children, however, we must take care not to misplace our concerns and to thereby distort the world of the early childhood classroom. Fears connected with sexuality are negatively impacting early childhood education in several important ways. There were never many men in this historically female field, but now there are almost none. The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** calculated that less than 4 percent of preschool teachers in the United States are men and they only represent about 1.3 percent of family home care providers. It is not uncommon for men teaching in preschool and lower elementary classrooms to be told by school directors that they need to be moved to a higher grade or to a job where they do not have direct contact with young children, thereby avoiding unwarranted accusations. While men in general are discouraged from working in the early childhood classroom, the situation is even more acute for gay men, who are constructed as sexual predators, unfit to work with young children (Silin, 1995; Tobin, 1997). In this climate of fear, female teachers are also suspect and limited in the ways they can interact with children. For example, many preschools have instituted rules that prevent preschool teachers from cleaning up students who soil themselves in bathroom accidents. Preschool teachers in many locales are required to attend “no touch” and “safe-touch” workshops where they are told to not hold children on their laps (Johnson, 2000), or if they do, to make sure the child sits “side-saddle” and not with legs apart and facing away rather than toward the teacher. These restrictions on adult behavior conjure images of children-at-risk. They also contribute to an image of children-as-risky. The early childhood education classroom has been turned into a “panopticon,” a site where teachers feel they must continuously have all of the children in their class within their sight, to prevent sex play, sexual abuse, and other perceived dangers. In combination, these orientations to sex and sexuality represent a dramatic shift away from a view of sexuality as an essential component of the lives of young children and an important dimension of their healthy physical and mental development. See also *Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education; Parents and Parent Involvement; Reconceptualists.*

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Joseph Tobin

Sexual Abuse

For thousands of years, sexual interactions by adults with children have been a regular occurrence. The social historian deMause (1974) noted that children of ancient Greece and Rome, especially boys, were frequently sexually exploited. Even today, there are those, such as members of the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), who believe adult-child sexual contact is appropriate and healthy. Entire industries have been created to support adult interest in child pornography, child prostitution, child sex tours, and other forms of sexual exploitation.

Child sexual abuse has only recently become recognized as an important social, political, and legal problem. The 1978 Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation Act and the 1986 Child Sexual Abuse and Pornography Act made it a federal crime to exploit a child sexually or to permit a child to engage in child pornography.

In the United States, the current definition of sexual abuse includes activities by a parent or other adult such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006). It is defined in CAPTA, the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (U.S. House of Representatives, 2003, Title 42, Chapter 67, Subchapter I, §5106g) as follows:

- a. the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or
- b. the rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

Sexuality in young children is a natural occurrence leading unfortunately to millions of unnatural acts by pedophiles, particularly those aroused by prepubescent children. Of the estimated 906,000 children who were determined to be victims of child abuse or neglect in 2003, just 10 percent were sexually abused. Of all parents who were perpetrators of child abuse or neglect, fewer than 3 percent were associated with sexual abuse. More than three-quarters of perpetrators were friends or neighbors (National Clearinghouse, 2005). Many believe that most reports underestimate prevalence. While retrospective studies of adults suggest that ages seven to twelve is the period where children are most at risk of sexual abuse, more recent studies suggest that rates of sexual abuse have little variation for children three years of age or older.

Conceptual issues currently being discussed by professionals include (a) the cultural context, including normal patterns of touching and physical contact; (b) evaluating the intent of the perpetrator; (c) the exploitation of adult power and authority over the child; and (d) age or maturational differences between perpetrators and victims, especially given recent interest in adolescent and child victimizers (Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 1999).

Children have been sexually molested outside the home by Catholic priests, YMCA and Boy Scout staff members, and child care providers, as a weapon of war and may be associated with abduction and human trafficking. The first national study of sexual abuse in child care settings (Finkelhor et al., 1988) found children were at lower risk from sexual abuse in child care than in their own homes. In those cases where sexual abuse took place in a child care setting, the vast majority of cases (83%) involved single perpetrators, and child care staff and/or staff family members were most likely to be perpetrators. Few things predicted which children or families would be victimized. Abuse was most likely to occur in bathrooms or nap rooms. While the most common form of molestation was touching or fondling of children's genitals, penetration occurred in 93 percent of all cases in licensed child care settings. In considering prevention, several risk factors should be considered (Kalinowski et al., 1988). Urban settings, a heterogeneous staff, periodic but unpredictable supervised visits by parents, screening staff family members, and open parental access appeared to help reduce the incidence of sexual abuse. Facilities designed to minimize opportunities for inappropriate, hidden adult-child behavior may also reduce potential abuse.

Only 3 percent of confirmed child abuse cases in 1997 occurred in child care centers (Wang and Daro, 1998). Statistically, children have been safer in child care and other early childhood settings from the risk of sexual abuse than in their own homes. Molestation by family members, or boyfriends of the mother, is also likely to have greater posttraumatic stress disorder symptomatology. Many professionals believe false allegations of child sexual abuse against fathers stemming from divorce-custody situations are increasing.

It is also important to remember that many of the high-profile sexual molestation in child care cases in the 1980s were later found to have significant shortcomings, especially as a result of leading and suggestive interviews of children by case workers and law enforcement personnel.

Current research issues include the reliability of medical diagnoses and assessments; racial, ethnic, and gender differences in perpetrators and victims; attempts to better understand the roots of pedophilia; relationships between the age and severity of molestation and long-term health; where to locate convicted pedophiles after release from prison; and the advantages and difficulties of teaching children about their bodies, how to protect themselves, and how and when to inform adults about concerns.

Early childhood professionals, parents, and members of the community have a responsibility to protect children from sexual abuse, as well as a responsibility to guard against overreaction to a terrible but relatively rare occurrence, one consequence of which has been to effectively eliminate males from the out-of-home development of young children. *See also* Sex and Sexuality in Young Children.

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Michael Kalinowski

Skinner, Burrhus Frederic (1904–1990)

B. F. Skinner founded a movement in the field of psychology called *radical behaviorism*. He won numerous awards in his lifetime, including the National Medal of Science, which was presented to him in 1968 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, and the first Citation for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to Psychology, which he received from the American Psychological Association (APA) shortly before his death. B. F. Skinner is now universally regarded as the most influential behavioral psychologist of the twentieth century. More than any other behaviorist, his view of human development stimulated research that had very important implications for teaching practices in the fields of early childhood regular education and early childhood special education.

Skinner was born in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. As a young man he had aspirations of becoming a writer and enrolled in Hamilton College in New York, where he received a BA in English literature in 1926. He spent nearly a year in Greenwich Village working as a bookstore clerk and writing fiction in his spare time, but soon became disillusioned with his literary skills. At the age of twenty-four, he decided to pursue graduate work in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University. He received his PhD in 1931 and remained at Harvard until 1936. It was during this postdoctoral period that he conducted a series of animal experiments using a method he called the *experimental analysis of behavior*. Based on this work, he formulated several *principles of operant reinforcement theory*, described various *schedules of reinforcement*, and demonstrated how new behaviors could be learned through processes such as *shaping*, *fading*, and *chaining*.

In 1936, Skinner married Yvone Blue. The couple moved to Minneapolis, where he taught and continued to conduct research at the University of Minnesota. In 1938, they had their first child, Julie. Skinner also published his first book, *The Behavior of Organisms: An Experimental Analysis*, which contained findings from animal experiments that he used to support his theoretical arguments. In 1943, toward the end of his tenure at the University of Minnesota, Skinner's wife gave birth to a second daughter, Deborah. Two years later he accepted the position of chair of the Department of Psychology at Indiana University. In 1946, he and a small group of behavior analysts arranged the first meeting of the Society of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, which eventually led (twelve years later) to the establishment of the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*. In 1948, he returned as a tenured professor to Harvard, where he remained for the rest of his career.

During his lifetime, Skinner published dozens of theoretical and empirical journal articles as well as several important books. In 1948, he published *Walden Two*, which described a visit to an imaginary utopian community where U.S. citizens lived far better than people in the outside world. Skinner wrote the book because he wanted to demonstrate the advantages of a society based on scientific social planning and reinforcement principles of human development. In 1957, he presented an operant analysis of language development in a book titled *Verbal Behavior*, which was not particularly well received in the scientific community and strongly criticized by the noted linguist, Noam Chomsky. In 1971, he published *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, which proved to be very controversial and prompted a series of university lectures and television appearances. Skinner continued to feel that his ideas were often misrepresented, which prompted him to write *About Behaviorism* in 1974. Toward the end of his life, he remained very active and wrote a three-volume autobiography, *Particulars of My Life: The Shaping of a Behaviorist*, and *A Matter of Consequences*. Skinner was diagnosed with leukemia in 1989 but continued to work productively. He presented his last talk to a standing-room-only crowd at the August 1990 meeting of the American Psychological Association. Ten days later he finished the manuscript from which he had taken many of the ideas for his presentation, then quietly died a few hours later.

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Vey M. Nordquist and William Bryan Higgins

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory is “a framework for analyzing human motivation, thought, and action” (Bandura 1986, p. xi). First proposed in 1963 by Albert **Bandura** and Richard Walters, this theory outlines a process by which people learn through direct experience and observing others. Since introducing this theory, Bandura has changed its name several times to emphasize its evolution. Because Bandura and his colleagues broadened its perspective to include concepts beyond observational learning, it was renamed social learning theory in the 1970s. In 1986, Bandura again revised and renamed it **social cognitive theory**. However, many people and textbooks continue to use the older names.

Concepts central to contemporary understandings of this theory include reciprocal determinism, modeling, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. As is the case with the theory itself, reciprocal determinism is referred to by different names, including triadic reciprocity, reciprocal causation, and reciprocal determinism. According to social cognitive theorists, human functioning can be explained by the interactions of three factors: behavior, person, and environment. The behavioral factors are the observable behaviors of the individual. Personal factors include an individual’s thoughts, beliefs, personality traits, emotions, and biology (e.g., sex, race/ethnicity, disability). Environmental factors include both the social (e.g., peers, parents, teachers) and physical (e.g., schoolroom, house/apartment, playground) environments. The following example of a three-year-old girl illustrates how these three factors combine and interact to influence the development of children. A three-year-old girl who attends a preschool (physical environment) will play (behavior) with many peers (social environment). This interaction may increase her skills (person) in dealing with social conflict, which are manifested in the behavior of talking to, rather than hitting, another child who takes the toy she was playing with. This change in behavior, in turn, can influence her peers’ attitudes and behaviors (her social environment) toward her and her attitude (person) toward her peers. As this scenario shows, all these elements directly and indirectly cause changes in the other elements and illustrate the principle of triadic reciprocal determinism.

Modeling is also a major concept of social cognitive theory. “If human behavior depended solely on personally experienced consequences, most people would not survive the hazards of early development” (Bandura 1986, p. 283). People learn the vast majority of their behaviors through a combination of experience and modeling. Modeling occurs when a person observes someone else’s actions and the consequences of those actions, which in turn influence his or her behaviors, cognitions, or emotions. Bandura identified three important functions of

modeling: response facilitation, inhibition/disinhibition, and observational learning. Response facilitation occurs when an observer exhibits a previously learned behavior in response to a modeled action. Observing a model can also inhibit or disinhibit someone from behaving in a similar way. People might become inhibited after observing the negative consequences of a modeled event in that they do not perform the modeled activity themselves. People might become disinhibited after observing a modeled prohibited activity that is not punished if they in turn perform the modeled activity themselves. Response facilitation and inhibition/disinhibition are similar in that they relate to previously learned behaviors. The difference is that response facilitation involves socially acceptable behaviors while inhibition and disinhibition involve what usually are considered negative actions.

The final function is observational learning, which is how people learn new behaviors. In Bandura's famous experiment, children watched a film of a woman playing with a bobo doll (a blow-up clown that pops back up when hit). Typically, children punched the bobo doll; however, this woman hit it with a toy hammer, kicked and threw it. After observing this filmed behavior, when the children were given the opportunity to play with the bobo doll, they displayed similar behaviors, thus supporting the hypothesis that observational learning had occurred. However, children who also saw the filmed woman scolded for the inappropriate play with the bobo doll did not spontaneously display these same behaviors when given the opportunity. But, when asked to show what the woman on the film did, they could perform these behaviors. Therefore, although they still had learned through observation, these behaviors were inhibited through punishment of the model.

Whether newly learned behaviors are exhibited or previously learned behaviors are facilitated, inhibited, or disinhibited depends on the consequences of those behaviors. Consequences can be enactive or vicarious and can be either reinforcing or punishing. Enactive consequences are those that occur after a person's own behaviors while vicarious consequences are those that happen after a model's actions. Reinforcement is anything that increases the chances of the behavior occurring again and punishment decreases the chances of the behavior occurring again (this is a similarity to **behaviorism**). In Bandura's bobo experiment, the children who watched the filmed woman get scolded experienced vicarious punishment. A common occurrence in preschool settings is that after a preschool teacher praises a child for putting away some blocks, he and his two friends hurry to pick up the trucks. The first child was enactively reinforced while his friends were vicariously reinforced. Reinforcement and punishment indirectly influence behavior through expectations of future consequences (part of the person in reciprocal determinism). If people's behaviors are reinforced (punished), they expect the same consequence for the same, or similar, behaviors in the future. Therefore, these behaviors should reoccur (or not occur) in similar circumstances.

People do not model everyone that they observe. There are four conditions that observers must meet, plus three characteristics that potential models must have for modeling to occur successfully. Firstly, observers must pay attention to the modeling event, especially the relevant details of the behavior. Secondly,

observers must retain this information correctly within their long-term memory. Thirdly, observers must have the motoric ability to produce the behavior. Finally, observers must be motivated to perform the behavior. As mentioned previously, consequences of the modeled behaviors can increase or decrease observers' motivation to exhibit the behavior.

There are three elements—perceived similarity, competence, and status—that characterize individuals who are effective models. Typically, perceived similarity relates to age, gender, personal background, ethnicity/race, and interests. People tend to emulate models they think are competent and they ignore incompetent potential models. Even though adults might not consider a kindergartner competent, a four-year-old might. Observers also tend to emulate someone who has a higher status than they do. Many children hold teenagers in awe and believe that they have very high status. Adults may emulate people with money, prestige, or fame due to the high status that our society accords them. Regardless of the actual degree of similarity, competence, or status, if observers believe a potential model has all these elements in some combination they are more liable to pay attention to, retain in memory, and be motivated to emulate the model's behaviors or thinking patterns.

Many aspects associated with human functioning, such as thinking patterns, attitudes, or beliefs, cannot be directly observed. However, they can be learned through cognitive modeling or rule learning. With cognitive modeling, people verbalize their thinking patterns, thereby making these unobservable thoughts, attitudes, or beliefs observable to someone else. For instance, many teachers and parents point to items and count aloud because they want young children to learn this thinking strategy. With rule learning, people observe the behavioral manifestations of covert elements (e.g., beliefs, attitudes) and infer the rule behind these occurrences. For instance, a child whose parent is easily angered and stomps around, swears, or throws things may learn to be easily angered also.

In addition to reciprocal determinism and modeling, beliefs of self-efficacy influence the nature and extent of learning through experience and observation. Self-efficacy (part of the person in reciprocal determinism) was defined by Bandura as a person's belief about his or her capability to perform a specific action to attain a goal. Self-efficacy affects human functioning in all areas of life through four psychological processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective.

When faced with obstacles, more self-efficacious people think analytically and adapt their strategies, while less self-efficacious people begin to think erratically and choose less effective strategies. More self-efficacious people think about success and the steps they will take to reach that positive outcome while less self-efficacious people think about failure and how they and others will react to that negative outcome. These differing cognitions enhance more self-efficacious people's chances of overcoming difficulties but exacerbate the negative situation for less self-efficacious people.

People motivate themselves through forethought and their beliefs about their chances of success and failure. People with high self-efficacy tend to maintain or even increase their motivation and efforts after difficulties, viewing them as temporary setbacks rather than failures. They attribute these setbacks to insufficient effort or uncontrollable factors and their successes to sufficient effort, good

strategy use, or high ability. On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy quickly give up when faced with difficulties. They attribute their failures to low intelligence or ability and their successes to uncontrollable factors, such as luck or other people.

Children develop self-efficacy beliefs through the natural consequences of and other people's reactions to their own behaviors. Positive outcomes can enhance positive self-efficacy while negative outcomes can decrease self-efficacy. Parents, teachers, and other adults can increase young children's positive self-efficacy beliefs through enhancing opportunities for positive outcomes, being responsive to and encouraging children's positive behaviors, and attributing setbacks to lack of effort or wrong strategy use rather than to lack of intelligence or ability. Peers and siblings can also affect a child's self-efficacy beliefs through modeling and social comparisons.

The fourth major concept of social cognitive theory is self-regulation, which is the process through which people control their thoughts, feelings, and actions that help them progress toward their goals. The four phases of self-regulation are goal setting, self-observation (or self-monitoring), self-judgment (or self-assessment), and self-reaction.

Some goals are more effective in enhancing self-regulation than others. Although long-term goals are very important, they are more effective when divided into shorter-term or sub-goals. Specific goals are better than vague or general goals. An effective goal also needs to be attainable but challenging to be motivating.

During the self-observation phase, people monitor their behaviors related to their specific goal. They can do this through a physical record of progress, or lack of progress, toward the goal. People who physically record or chart their progress might spontaneously change their behavior due to this record keeping.

During the self-judgment phase, people compare their self-observations to their goals and determine whether they are progressing or not in several ways. Firstly, people can compare their current behaviors directly to their goal. For example, if a second-grader's goal is to read a chapter book this week, she can gauge how much progress she has made on Friday. Secondly, people can compare their current behaviors to their own previous behaviors. A six-year-old knows he can tie his shoes now, although last month he could not. Thirdly, people can compare themselves to other people. An eight-year-old can ride a two-wheeler while her friend still has training wheels. Finally, people can compare themselves to an absolute standard. A junior in high school compares his cumulative grade in his biology class to that which is required for an A.

After people self-observe and self-judge, they must decide what to do next. If the goal has been reached or adequate progress is being made, people might self-reinforce. This self-reinforcement can be praise, a feeling of satisfaction, or a tangible reward. One potential hazard with tangible self-reinforcements is choosing a self-defeating reinforcer. For instance, if dieters chose to reinforce themselves with a banana split, this could cause them to go off their diet and gain some weight back. If people are not progressing toward their goal, there are several possible reactions. Based on the judgment that the goal was not appropriate to begin with, they may change the goal by making it more specific or less challenging. If the goal is appropriate but they still are not progressing adequately, people could

decide to put forth more effort or change the strategies involved in reaching the goal. These four phases of self-regulation are cyclical in that people continuously move back and forward from one phase to another.

In summary, social cognitive theory explains human functioning through analyzing how people's behaviors, personal characteristics, and environment interact. Some of the major elements of these reciprocal determinants are the behaviors and thinking patterns of effective models (social environment), and a person's self-efficacy and self-regulation (person). Through using social cognitive theory, teachers and parents can become effective models for young children and can aid them in developing positive self-efficacy and self-regulation.

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Social Competence

Early social competence has been linked to later successes, not just in social and psychological domains but also in academic, behavioral, and other aspects of well-being and adjustment. Although a long history of research has focused on the socioemotional, physiological, and cognitive correlates of early social competence, a unitary working definition of 'social competence' remains elusive. Because of the complexity of the construct, researchers have used a wide range of criteria, referring to specific social skills (e.g., social information processing), the impact of behaviors on others (e.g., sociometric ratings, popularity), and children's success in achieving goals in social settings (e.g., resource control).

Despite the lack of a common definition, most agree that socially competent children show positive behaviors toward others, are able to develop healthy social relationships, are seen favorably by others, and have "accurate social information processing" skills (Creasey et al., 1998). Researchers also suggest that "competence" is a subjective evaluation of the child's overall effectiveness in navigating social worlds, and includes adaptive behaviors (i.e., skills, physical development, language skills, academic skills), social skills (i.e., interpersonal behavior, self-related behaviors, task-related behaviors), and the results of actions, particularly peer acceptance (Gresham and Reschly, 1987).

The complexity of the construct and the lack of an accepted definition of social competence are paralleled by a divergence of instrumentation and methodology used to study it (McConnell and Odom, 1999). Methods to study social competence have included direct observation, peer nominations, self-report,

and surveys. Measures also vary in focus—with some targeting performance and skills (e.g., ability to cooperate) and others examining outcomes, for example, how much children are liked (Hubbard and Coie, 1994).

While varying significantly in focus and scope, measures overlap significantly. Children who achieve high scores on certain measures (e.g., emotional regulation) tend to receive high scores on others (e.g., academic success, sociometric ratings). And while researchers and practitioners understandably rely on particular measures of competence depending on their specific interest, attempts to comprehensively measure social competence should include a combination of instruments.

The Development of Social Competence—Infancy to Childhood

Social competence is tied to cognitive and socioemotional skills, and social competence is related to the child's developmental stage. In infancy, social competence includes awareness of the environment and the ability to engage in meaningful interactions with others, particularly caregivers. Infants can be quite active and responsive to the environment. They smile to caregivers, open and close their mouths, blink their eyes, wave their hands, and even imitate adults' behaviors. Such interactions help infants communicate needs to caregivers and can influence caregiver responses. Such meaningful interactions ideally help to establish a secure attachment to a caregiver, considered by many to be one of the most significant experiences in a person's lifetime—possibly forecasting the quality of later relationships (Oden, 1999).

With age, sociocognitive and emotional skills become more sophisticated, and social worlds become more complex. Children begin to interact with different companions and gain access to more contexts (e.g., school, playground, and neighborhood). They become increasingly able to choose what contexts to participate in and with whom to interact. In other words, children begin to take a more active role in determining and navigating their own social worlds.

Peer relationships come to the forefront as the child encounters peers at school and in the neighborhood. Peer interactions are integral to the development of social competence—influencing school performance and adjustment, and providing emotional support and a sense of belonging (Ladd, 1999). In the context of peer relationships, a child learns to negotiate and manage conflicts, to argue and experience success and frustration, to understand others' opinions, and to take others' perspectives. In other words, during childhood, even while the family continues to be a significant arena in which aspects of social competence are developed, peer interactions increasingly become an important venue through which skills and social competencies emerge.

Influences on Social Competence

Multiple factors contribute to young children's social competence. Parents in particular contribute to children's social competence both through their genetic legacy and the nature of their social interactions. Effective parental interactions, including involvement in play, and direct teaching and encouragement, promote

children's social competence with peers. For instance, preschoolers who are rated as popular by teachers often have parents who are more involved in their social play. Likely, through observing and imitating the roles of important adult figures, children learn accepted social norms associated with socially competent behavior (Creasey et al., 1998). Parents can also arrange, provide opportunities for, and facilitate children's play with peers. For instance, mothers can enhance the quality of toddlers' play with unfamiliar peers by giving positive feedback. It is not hard to imagine how parents are able to help children seek out experiences and enhance their interactions with others. Conversely, stressful home environments can have adverse effects on social competence. High levels of marital conflict have been linked to higher rates of children's problematic behaviors. This might be partly due to a disruption of parental practices, as well as the weakening of the child-caregiver **attachment** bonds.

Although parents are the primary source of social and emotional support for young children, peers also play an ever-increasing role in promoting children's competence. The implications of peer interactions for social competence have already been discussed. But in addition, peers can also serve as a protective factor against many stressors that might impede the development of social competence, including parental discord (Oden, 1999).

Negative peer experiences can have adverse effects on social competence. Rejection or victimization can become a source of significant stress, contributing to feelings of loneliness and low self esteem. In addition, peer rejection can escalate in a negative developmental spiral. When less socially competent children are rejected by peers, they have limited positive social interactions, which adversely impacts social competence. As a result, they are less willing to interact with peers (Ladd, 1999).

Another important component related to social competence is the quality of the early childhood environment (that the child care setting can serve as a protective factor for children who might have insecure attachments with caregivers). Experiencing high-quality child care has also been shown to facilitate secure attachments between children and their teachers—in turn promoting social competence and other positive outcomes (Howes and James, 2002).

Children are also active agents in their own socialization. They are not passive recipients of socialization influences, but instead show ever-increasing agency in architecting their own experiences. Thus, the child is a significant influence on the development of his own social competence.

Finally, one cannot try to understand social competence without taking into consideration the cultural background of the child. Cultural groups vary in innumerable ways, particularly in the experiences of children as well as what is considered as "competent" in specific settings (Tietjen, 1994). For instance, Schneider (1993) found important differences in the levels of aggression and play behaviors of African American and Hopi Indian children—with the latter being more interested in group success than the former. In recent years, research on parental ethnotheories has also revealed interesting cross-cultural variation in expectations and ideals for their children. Unfortunately, the consideration of **culture** in studies of competence has been infrequent.

In summary, early social competence is a significant facet of children's development that has important implications for both current functioning in the social setting, as well as in forecasting later successes. There is no commonly agreed-upon definition of social competence, and this is reflected in the diversity of measures and instruments used to assess social competence. Moreover, because social competence is intertwined with cognitive, socioemotional, and physical skills, what is considered as "social competence" also changes with age—from simple interactions with caregivers, to more complex relationships and experiences with a broader range of people. And while there are some limitations in the current literature on social competence, scholars recognize the importance of the topic and are working in many ways to better understand this aspect of children's development. *See also* Classroom Environments; Parents and Parent Involvement; Peers and Friends.

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Social Constructionism

Social constructionist theory suggests that psychological phenomena (e.g. emotions, self, and the mind) are not individual but social in nature; they are

transmitted, created, maintained, and constructed through language and discourse. Social constructionism as a theory has been influenced by a number of multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary traditions, including sociology (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), critical theory (Foucault, 1976), and literary theory (Derrida, 1976). Contemporary interpreters of social constructionism in the psychological realm, including Kenneth Gergen and Rom Harré, emphasize the role of language and discourse in the construction of psychological processes such as the self, emotions, memory, and attitudes. Social constructionism came about as a challenge to empiricism and positivism and the notion of objectivity. A major assumption is that traditional notions about truth, knowledge, and the nature of reality should be examined critically, as all knowledge is historically and culturally specific.

Social constructionism as a theory of knowledge construction is distinct from, although conceptually related to, the theory of social constructivism. They differ with respect to a fundamental tenet having to do with the role and place of the individual mind. Social constructivism (see Lev Vygotsky entry) focuses on how the individual mind is first social and then individual and highlights the importance of language in the process. In social constructivism, the individual mind internalizes ways of being through the social and cultural tools of the society. Social constructionism, in contrast, places a primary emphasis on discourse as a vehicle for constructing self and ways of knowing the world. Social constructionists eschew the notion of the mind as an individual container and instead focus on what happens outside of the mind between people. From this perspective, people are not born as individuals with inner states, but rather the individual and inner states are socially constructed through moment-to-moment interactions. A major aim of social constructionist research is to uncover the ways that constructs such as knowledge, emotions, cognition, self, gender, and sexuality are socially constructed through social, cultural, and ideological discourses.

Social constructionist theory views language as a critical feature of the construction process, such that the underlying assumption is that all meaning is brought into being through language. Kenneth Gergen (1999) posits, “If language is a central means by which we carry on our lives together—carrying the past into the present to create the future—then our ways of talking and writing become key targets for concern. It is not only our grand languages of self, truth, and morality at stake; our futures are also fashioned from mundane exchanges in families, friendships, and organizations, in the informal comments, funny stories, and the remainder of the daily hubbub” (p. 62). This statement suggests that ways of talking and using language in everyday interactions shape ways of knowing, being, and doing. However, language is not simply a way to express what we see in the world, it is “the doing of life itself” (Gergen, 1999, p. 35).

Larger discourses also play a key role (e.g., discourses about gender or sexuality) and contain “frames” within which words shape meaning. For example, the larger discourse frames tell us what it means to be male, female, heterosexual, homosexual, student, teacher, black, white, poor, rich, Republican, or Democrat. These larger discourse frames provide “ways of being” that are grounded in what these terms mean in our society. As such, discourse provides a way for us to

interpret the world. Through various discourses we form notions of self and identity, which are bound by power, history, culture, and ideology.

Social constructionists also suggest that research paradigms are socially constructed and built from discourses about knowledge, truth, and reality. For example, social constructionists consider how scientific knowledge is socially constructed through discourses about science, rationality, and logic. Other social constructionist critiques focus on how knowledge is located in particular historic and cultural contexts. Other areas of social constructionist inquiry include questions of how inner states such as emotions are known and regarded as true and how they are related to the power structures and ideology of a culture. How is truth related to our subjective experience? Is all truth subjective in nature? Is there a bounded individual self? If so, how is it contextual, political, and historical? What is the role of discourse and language in the construction of reality, truth, and knowledge? These are some of the questions asked by those who study social constructionism.

Early childhood scholars with interests in classroom processes have studied what gets accomplished by children in their daily lives as students and peers through a social constructionist lens. Traditional topics in the psychological literature such as gender and identity, social competence, friendship processes, and social isolation have been reexamined not as stable internal traits but as constructs that are constantly being created and recreated as children engage with each other and with adults. Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré (1990), for example, see gender as constructed by multiple subject positioning that are taken up by children as they negotiate who they are in social interactions. Subject positioning are fluid and open to change in moment-to-moment discursive practices. Similarly, applying the notion of subject positioning to children's social status within peer groups, Scott (2003) also interpreted children's rejection and isolation not as an outcome of enduring poor social skills, but as a positioning constructed through discourse and social interaction.

A central criticism of social constructionism is the notion of agency. Is agency a top-down or bottom-up process? Do everyday ways of talking, being, and doing determine the larger discourse frame or does the larger discourse frame determine everyday ways of talking, being, and doing? How much of a role do humans have in shaping their ways of talking, knowing, being, and doing if everything is socially constructed? It is still unclear how much influence the larger discourse frames have on everyday interactions, as well as how much everyday moment-to-moment interactions have on the construction of the larger discourses of our society. This is an issue that is debated within social constructionist theory and is problematic. In the top-down view, humans are locked into the roles set by the larger discourse frames of the society, which leaves little room for change at the micro level and little human agency. While the bottom-up view positions humans as actively constructing and reconstructing discourse, according to Burr (2003), "The individual is a 'given' from which society arises, and therefore cannot be said to be constructed by that society" (p. 183). Thus, the notion of agency and the process of construction (e.g., Is it a top-down or bottom-up process?) is one aspect of social constructionism that is still under debate. *See also* Constructionism.

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Samara Madrid and Rebecca Kantor

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is an educational theory with roots in both cognitive **constructivism** (Piaget, 1950; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969) and **socio-cultural theory** (Vygotsky, 1978); and conceptual links to the theory of discourse known as **social constructionism** (Gergen, 1999). The discourse which shaped social constructivism dates back to the 1970s when a community of educators raised their concerns with transmission models of teaching and learning that emphasize rote memorization and decontextualized tasks. At its core, social constructivism rests on the theoretical assumption that reality and knowledge are emergent and situated in social context and constructed as people engage with others in joint activity (Cobb, 2002; Cole and Wertsch, 1996; Wells, 2000).

Social Constructivism as Distinct from Constructivism

While social constructivism shares some epistemological notions with cognitive constructivism, within the field of early childhood education it was also a response to this theory. Specifically, social constructivism in educational settings arose out of a concern about the teacher’s role in the classroom. For example, in the application of constructivist theory in classrooms, interaction and **direct instruction** between children and teachers is played down in favor of an emphasis on the child’s exploration of the physical environment. *Social* constructivism, in contrast, emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the teacher and student, and students with each other, as social interaction is viewed as the primary means for children to construct new meanings. As such, social constructivism and *constructivism* differ in a fundamental tenet; constructivism views learning as *following* development and the disequilibrium that occurs as children act upon the physical environment, whereas social constructivism views learning as *leading* development and as something that occurs as children engage in social activities with others.

According to social constructivist theory, cognition and learning exists in a dialectical relationship with the social world. Dialectical process is a term used both

by social constructivists and constructivists to describe how children resolve cognitive conflicts to produce higher levels of mental functioning. Constructivists suggest that cognitive conflicts are resolved through the child acting on the physical environment, and the child gradually comes to understand how things work—practically and in the abstract, types of knowledge that Piaget referred to as “physical knowledge” and “logico-mathematical knowledge.” Social constructivists interpret conflicts and knowledge differently, suggesting that conflicts are resolved through social processes; knowledge is something that is distributed across, between and within individuals and the collective. However, knowledge is not simply transmitted to the child from the social world, but rather it is appropriated and transformed as children engage with others, making children active agents in the learning process. The underlying assumption is that knowledge is always emerging as the child acts upon the social context and the social context acts upon the child, which allows for new meanings to be constructed as they influence one another. According to the social constructivist, then, knowledge is “(re)created in a specific activity setting, involving particular individuals who have a common goal, or at least a set of overlapping goals, to which they are all orienting” (Wells, 2000, p. 71).

Social Constructivism as Distinct from Sociocultural Theory

Social constructivism is also conceptually related, but distinct from, sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and activity theory (Leont’ev, 1981). One notable distinction is how each theory views the contextual nature of learning and the construction of knowledge. For example, sociocultural theory places an emphasis on the mediating role of historically situated cultural tools and artifacts. In other words, it is not the social context alone that produces new understandings, but also the cultural tools and artifacts within it that produce and shape new knowledge: “artifacts clearly do not serve simply to facilitate mental processes that would otherwise exist. Instead, they fundamentally shape and transform them” (Cole and Wertsch, 1996, p. 252). Similarly, social constructivism and activity theory differ in that activity theory examines not only the immediate social and cultural context and the historical context but also how the production of knowledge is both constrained and shaped by history, which informs present “activity systems” (Cole, 1995). The central focus of activity theory is on systems of activities, which are bound by history and culture and have primacy over the individual cognitive functioning as the unit of analysis. The important point is that the collective systems located in social, cultural, and historical contexts override the notion of the isolated individual mind.

Social Constructivism as Distinct from Social Constructionism

A final distinction that is important to note are the differences between social constructivism and social constructionism (Gergen, 1999). Social *constructivism* and social *constructionism* differ in that social constructivism focuses on the Vygotskian notion that the individual mind is first social and then individual and the importance social context has in learning. In contrast, social constructionism

places a primary emphasis on discourse as a vehicle for constructing knowledge (Gergen, 1999). The important distinction rests on the role and place of the individual mind. In social *constructivism*, the individual mind internalizes ways of being through collaboration with others in social context, while social *constructionism* eschews the notion of the mind as an individual container and instead focuses on what happens between the minds of people.

Social Constructivism and Educational Practice

Paul Cobb's work (2002) on mathematical learning is an example of the evolution from constructivism to social constructivism as the theory has been applied to education. Cobb's framework is derived from both constructivism and social interaction, and "together, the two perspectives treat mathematical learning as both a process of active individual construction and a process of enculturation into the mathematical practices of wider society" (McClain and Cobb, 2001, p. 105). The focus is not on the development of mathematical knowledge in isolation, but rather on understanding how mathematical learning and cognitive growth are grounded in classroom communities. Within classroom communities, sociomathematical norms and practices are constructed, accepted, and/or rejected by teachers and students, processes that affect cognitive growth and mathematical understandings. Within this perspective the learner and the teacher, as well as the individual and the collective, are seen to exist in a reflexive relationship in which "one does not exist without the other" (McClain and Cobb, 2001, p. 105).

Given that the role of the social context and interactions with others is central in social constructivism, practical applications have also focused on joint activity between learners and teachers. According to Wells (2000), "Vygotskian theory, or social constructivism, as we might call its educational application, thus calls for an approach to learning and teaching that is both exploratory and collaborative" (p. 61). Learning and teaching from this perspective views both the teacher and the students as active agents in the construction of knowledge. Content should not be taught in a rote linear fashion but should be explored and examined in a holistic, emergent manner so that the focus is on the process of joint activity rather than on specific predetermined outcomes. An **emergent curriculum** allows for dialogue and diversity in ways of solving problems that supports and builds on the prior knowledge that teachers and students bring with them in order to create shared understandings. In this view, each learning event is seen as unique, and the teacher and the students both take the position of the learner. This differs from other views that position the teacher as someone who imparts knowledge to the less advanced students.

In a social constructivist classroom, knowledge is always in the process of being constructed; both the teacher and the students are always constructing new ways of thinking about and solving problems. Thus, practical applications of social constructivist teaching are grounded in the notion that learning is a reciprocal and collaborative process among all members. *See also* Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich.

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Social Studies Curriculum. See Curriculum, Social Studies

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Socioeconomic status (SES) is commonly used in the early childhood field to describe the social class level of an individual or family, typically taking into account income, accumulated wealth and assets, and educational background. This article summarizes the definitions and measurement of SES, as well as the implications of SES for early childhood development and policy implications for early care and education (ECE).

Definition and Measurement

There is no standard definition or formula for defining SES. Income, wealth, and educational background are typically used to calculate SES level, and can be defined as annual income, monetary value of assets, and formal educational degrees. In much of the research that utilizes this variable, statistical procedures control for effects of SES in order to measure the effects of another variable, such as a treatment in an experimental design. Because SES has many implications for child outcomes, it is also important to consider as a source of influence. Historical and cultural contexts help determine the appropriateness of the various scales used to measure SES. For example, in the nineteenth century few Americans had college degrees, making the use of formal degrees as an educational scale inappropriate for this time period. Similarly, using an American asset or income scale would be an inappropriate measure of SES in another country.

Because income and educational attainment are positively correlated, this measure works in most circumstances. However, certain circumstances or

occupations can create problems for measuring SES, such as the temporary status of graduate student or clergymen who are well-educated but generally low-income. Researchers and demographers must be careful to state their definition of SES in their studies, and readers must be cautious when making comparisons and generalizing across contexts.

The concepts of **poverty** and SES often overlap but are defined differently. Poverty is calculated using absolute income whereas SES is measured relative to others. Educational level can be measured using formal degrees (e.g., a bachelor's or master's) or by other variables, such as the number of books in the home. The federal poverty line in the United States is a specific dollar threshold, defined as the amount of money required to adequately feed a family for a year (as determined by the United States Department of Agriculture) multiplied by three. In 2005, the U.S. poverty level for a family of four was \$19,350. If a family's income falls below this threshold, the family is considered poor. If a family's income falls below 200 percent of the poverty line (\$38,700 for a family of four in 2005), the family is considered low-income. Compared with income, SES is generally a more stable measure across time. While income may change drastically each year, SES takes into account more constant variables such as educational attainment and accumulated wealth.

Demographics

Educational attainment. Eighty percent of the U.S. population over age 25 have graduated from high school, and about one-quarter hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Less than 10 percent of the population holds a postgraduate degree (master's, professional, or doctorate degrees).

Income. In 2004, the median annual household income in the United States was \$44,473. For the most part, the income distribution is concentrated in the middle. In 2000, 12 percent of the U.S. population had annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more while 16 percent had incomes less than \$15,000.

Characteristics of Low-SES children. Demographers and researchers, including the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) have found that a large and increasing number of children in the United States live in low-SES homes. The likelihood of living in lower-SES families varies according to children's age, ethnicity, family structure, and geography. Young children are even more at risk of living in poverty. In 2005 nearly 20 percent of children under age six lived below the poverty line. In 2000 the NCCP reported that the poverty rate for children under three was found to be 80 percent higher than the rate for adults. Black and Hispanic children are more likely to live in lower-income households than Asian or white children. In addition, single-parent households and families with young parents are significantly more likely to be low-income. Southern and western states in the United States have higher rates of childhood poverty than northern or eastern states.

The Implications of Low Socioeconomic Status

Low-SES home environments tend to be less stimulating for young children than mid- and upper-SES homes, often due to a lack of resources or education. Several studies have investigated the impacts of socioeconomic status on children's development (for reviews, see Brooks-Gunn and Duncan, 1997, and McLloyd, 1998). Children in low-SES homes are at greater risk for inadequate nutrition and obesity, cognitive developmental delays and inadequate health care, increased exposure to environmental toxins such as lead (Evans, 2004), and a higher incidence of and exposure to abuse or neglect. Parents with income below the poverty line tend to be less responsive to their young children and use more punitive parenting techniques than those with income above. In addition, lower family income may lead to living in neighborhoods with higher crime rates, inadequately funded schools, and fewer resources for child development. Research has linked neighborhood influences with parenting practices and child outcomes. Several studies suggest that, in the long term, family income may have negative implications for adolescent well-being, particularly cognitive outcomes and school achievement.

Early care and education options are limited for low-income families, largely due to their high cost, and the few options available to low-SES families tend to be low-quality. In child care centers that serve low-income families, caregivers tend to display less warmth and responsiveness to children, and speak to children in more authoritarian ways than caregivers in centers serving middle- and upper-income families. Low-SES families are more likely to use informal child care (i.e., family, friend, and neighbor care or kith and kin care), which is unregulated and often low-quality.

Socioeconomic Status and Early Care and Education

Because of the few options available to low-SES families, public early care and education programs have been developed to serve low-income children. **Head Start** is a federal program established in the 1960s to provide preschool services to low-income families, and **Early Head Start** was developed more recently to serve low-income infants and toddlers. The recent wave of state universal prekindergarten programs has expanded services to more children. Child care subsidies help low-income families afford early care and education programs, and have been significantly increased to better serve more families since welfare reform in 1996.

Research has shown that high quality early care and education experiences can mitigate the negative effects of low SES (for reviews, see Barnett, 1998; Devaney et al., 1997). In the short term, participation in Head Start can enhance children's cognitive, social, and physical development. Long-term effects of intensive, high quality early childhood programs, such as the **High/Scope Perry Preschool** and the **Abecedarian Project**, include higher rates of high school graduation and reductions in the use of special education services in addition to enduring social benefits such as increased labor market productivity and higher taxable

earnings. Children from low-SES families show greater gains than children from middle- and upper-SES homes when provided with high-quality early care and education.

While public early childhood programs are important to and beneficial for low-income children, children from the working poor class are often caught in the middle—unable to afford high-quality care but ineligible for public options. In addition, targeted programs further segregate low-SES children. As a result, six states have recently established universal prekindergarten programs or are moving toward universal access for all children, regardless of SES.

In addition to providing or subsidizing direct ECE services, the SES of children and their ECE providers has policy implications. Policy makers must consider provider's SES when creating trainings. Low-SES providers may not have the funds to attend trainings, or may lack Internet access for on-line courses. In addition, the match in SES between provider and child has implications for home-school relations; families and their early childhood teachers must be able to relate and successfully communicate with each other.

Although there is no standard definition of socioeconomic status, recent research emphasizes the importance of SES for children's development. Living in low-SES homes is a risk factor for young children, affecting physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. However, these effects can be partially mitigated by early interventions that include high quality early care and education. Considering the large numbers of American children living in low-income homes, the expansion of high-quality early care and education programs is necessary to ensure that all young children have a healthy start in life. *See also* Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)

The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is a national organization that strives to improve the lives of the children and families of the South and to support the over 19,000 professionals who are members of the Southern Early Childhood Association. SECA encompasses 14 states in the Southern region: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Virginia. SECA brings together preschool, **kindergarten**, and primary teachers, administrators, caregivers, program directors, and individuals working with and for families to promote quality care and education for young children.

SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by doing the following:

- enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education;
- supporting families in their roles of caring for their children;
- fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families;
- increasing public understanding and support for policies and programs that ensure developmentally based services to young children and their families;
- focusing on Southern issues concerning children and families.

The Southern Early Childhood Association provides the following services to members of the Association and to state affiliates:

- Three issues of *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, a refereed professional journal which helps translate research into practice
- Three issues of the *SECA Reporter*, the professional's guide to what's happening in the South in early childhood education
- Support for state efforts to develop positive policy agendas for children
- Member benefit programs, including discounts on training and conferences
- Specialized publications that assist professionals and practitioners in working with young children.

For more information on SECA, visit the organization's Web site at www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org, or write to or call the following address or phone number: Southern Early Childhood Association, P.O. Box 55930, Little Rock, AR 72215-5930, 1-800-305-SECA

Glenda Bean

SPD. *See* Sensory Processing Disorder

Special Education. *See* Early Childhood Special Education

Spiritual Development

Children's spiritual development has rarely been a topic of study or investigation in the fields of child development and early childhood education in the United States. Given the increasing numbers of children from homes with diverse

religious beliefs amid the strong resistance to public discussion of religious beliefs and values, many adults believe that questions of spirituality are better left to children's families, religious leaders, and institutions (Banks and Banks, 2001). However, this omission from knowledge about child development limits practitioners' ability to develop fully integrated interventions with children and families. Furthermore, the lack of study of children's early experiences in religious and spiritual development may impact children's comprehensive development.

Although there is a lack of consensus on issues pertaining to spiritual development, key distinctions can help frame the issues and help develop practical approaches to working with children and families.

Significance

People of various religious faiths share the belief that spiritual development is central for the positive development of the individual and of society. Spiritual development may contribute to a moral system that promotes charity, compassion, and justice. Spiritual development may also help individuals and groups of individuals adjust positively to life circumstances, as indicated by studies of adolescents that report positive correlations between spirituality and adolescent thriving indices such as school engagement and the possessing of what researchers refer to as a moral compass (Dowling et al., 2004).

Spiritual development may prove important for addressing global issues having to do with religious differences. Sociopolitical events around the globe are often fueled by religious differences. Meanwhile, increased immigration and changes in religious experiences in families over time have made nations, and sometimes inhabitants in the same home, increasingly diverse in terms of religious traditions and spiritual values. Statistics about the number of adherents to particular faith traditions are controversial due to the interests and capacity of any authorizing group to measure religious behavior, particularly given the multiple criteria for determining religious group membership. Eileen Linder, the editor of the 2000 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, suggests that comparing statistics is not the best way to understand our increased religious pluralism: "We now have a critical mass of people from different religious traditions. Whether we have the numbers or not . . . we need to learn ways to engage with them" (Pluralism Project, 2006).

Early childhood educators are challenged to become familiar with a wide variety of religious and spiritual traditions. Competence around diverse religions and diverse approaches to spirituality can equip educators to serve children and families in more comprehensive and adequate ways, and such competence may generate support for scholarship.

The Distinction between Faith and Belief

There are general and historical distinctions between faith and belief. Wilfred Cantwell Smith describes faith as neither rare nor automatic, but rather as a ubiquitously prodigious hallmark of being human; faith is "the human potentiality for being human" (Smith, 1998, p. 142). As such, faith is sufficiently broad to

encompass any symbol system, be it religious or secular. Faith refers to the actual involvement and interaction with dogma, beliefs, and symbols, whereas belief refers only to tenets and dogmas. In this way the concept of belief is too narrow to encompass all that is spiritual.

When faith and belief are conflated, both are relegated to a lower level of existence characterized by a type of mysticism that is the product of some irrational feeling or exercise of the mind. Attention to human potential and social action shifts instead to private contemplations in the mind. The likelihood that a person's faith manifests itself in action that transforms the world is, then, lessened considerably.

The distinction between faith and belief has important implications for whether and how they are topics of discussion in public spheres. When thinking about faith as belief, educators may be hesitant to inquire about a family's faith, for fear of generating disagreement. However, the distinction between faith and belief facilitates public conversation, because faith is a dialectical relationship between self and widely held norms of compassion, generosity, and justice. No matter what the specific beliefs may be, then, there is apt to be considerable common ground between educator and family.

Organizing Frameworks for Understanding Development

The dominant framework for understanding religious and spiritual development has been the stage theory of development, which, with respect to spirituality, argues that humans follow a fixed trajectory of stages that develop toward an ideal type or universal endpoint. The stage theories of Jean **Piaget** and Lawrence **Kohlberg** are prime examples. Stage theories, then, share the idea that development is linear and normative.

Alternatives to stage theories view development as multidirectional movement toward many possible endpoints. The possibility of there being a range of endpoints shifts attention from the individual to the individual's interacting with his or her faith tradition or culture. The individual, positioned within complex social and cultural systems, develops both spiritually and otherwise as a composite of transactions and experiences. Using this frame, the individual develops spiritually to the extent that there is a good match between individual, faith tradition, and culture. This developmental-cultural approach allows for development to take on different meanings depending on faith tradition and culture.

Alternatives to stage theories also emphasize quantitative rather than qualitative changes in a person's faith. For instance, Kwilecki (1999) focuses on the role the supernatural has for the individual and how, with development, the supernatural becomes functional in multiple ways. What matters are how important the supernatural becomes in a person's life and the strength of a person's convictions, not qualitative changes in how a person thinks. Although spiritual development can be charted as qualitative change over time (from immature to mature), spiritual development also means a deepening and strengthening of faith and an approximating to ideals that are both culturally situated and universal.

An increasing amount of scholarship is expanding to include the religious and spiritual life of young children. An exploration of children's God concepts based

on the social learning and projection theories finds that children's beliefs are highly influenced by the beliefs of the mother (De Roos et al., 2004). A longitudinal study of mother-child dyads, with children entering at 14 months, finds positive links between committed compliance and internalization (Kochanska, 2002). Further collaboration between practitioners and researchers may help provide a deeper understanding of religion in the lives of young children, particularly because young children may not conform to the boundaries that adults erect between sacred and secular settings (Myers, 1997).

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Mona M. Abo-Zena and W. George Scarlett

Standardized Tests and Early Childhood Education

A test, as defined by the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999), is "an evaluative device or procedure in which a sample of an examinee's behavior in a specified domain is obtained and subsequently evaluated and scored using a standardized process." In test administration, standardization refers to "maintaining a constant testing environment and conducting the test according to detailed rules and specifications, so that testing conditions are the same for all test takers" (AERA, APA, and NCME, 1999).

The use of standardized tests with very young children has caused considerable controversy in the field of early childhood education and psychology (Dyer 1973; Shepard 1994). Educators of young children have raised concerns about the appropriateness of engaging young children in formal testing situations, the limitations of standardized test scores in describing young children's growth and development, and the use of test scores to evaluate the effectiveness of a range of programs that serve young children and their families.

In 1991, the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) issued a position statement that called for an immediate halt to "all testing of young children in preschool and in grades K-2 and the practice of testing every child in the later elementary years" (ACEI and Perrone, 1991). This position reflected the following several concerns:

- The inability of very young children to fully participate in most standardized assessment conditions, which require focused attention, a specific set of responses, and, in some instances, timed responses to a set format of questions and tasks. The major concern was whether young children were developmentally able to understand the task and to participate in standardized testing procedures.
- The failure of standardized test scores to provide classroom teachers with instructionally useful information about individual children, although the test scores were often used to make important inferences about the status of young children's growth and development.
- The use of potentially problematic inferences in making high-stakes decisions about children's entry into **kindergarten**, promotion and retention in the early grades, placement in special classes, etc., and
- The increasing pressure on early childhood educators to depart from what they considered sound curriculum practices to prepare children to take the tests.

A report to the National Education Goals Panel (Shepard et al., 1998) outlined the following set of general principles in early childhood assessment:

- Assessment should bring benefits for children.
- Assessments should be tailored to a specific purpose and should be reliable, valid, and fair for that purpose.
- Assessment policies should be designed recognizing that reliability and validity of assessments increase with children's age.
- Assessments should be age-appropriate in both content and the method of data collection.
- Assessments should be linguistically appropriate, recognizing that to some extent all assessments are measures of language.
- Parents should be a valued source of assessment information, as well as an audience for assessment results. (pp. 5-6)

In addition, the report presented four major assessment purposes: (1) to support learning, (2) identification of special needs, (3) for program evaluation and monitoring trends, and (4) for high-stakes accountability. However, the report cautioned that, "Before age 8, standardized achievement measures are not sufficiently accurate to be used for high-stakes decisions about individual children and schools. Therefore, high-stakes assessments intended for accountability purposes should be delayed until the end of third grade (or preferably fourth grade)" (Shepard et al., 1998, p. 21).

Ironically, as the movement to expand access to quality state-funded preschool education to all children grew in the 1990s, so did the calls for increased accountability and testing of young children. Under the **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001, testing in reading and **mathematics** was required of all students in grades 3-8 by the 2005-2006 academic year. With sanctions in place for schools in which children's test scores did not indicate progress, programs for young children were under increasing pressure to "get children ready" for the third-grade assessments.

In addition, in September of 2003 the **Head Start** Bureau implemented its own pre-k standardized test. The Head Start National Reporting System (NRS) was the first nationwide skills test to be administered to over 400,000 four- and

five-year-old children enrolled in Head Start–funded programs (Government Accountability Office, 2005).

The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECSSDE) issued a revised position statement in which they called for appropriate use of standardized measures in the assessment of young children (NAEYC/NAECSSDE 2003). The 2003 position statement did not call for a halt to standardized testing of young children. Rather, the document outlined the following set of guidelines intended to promote appropriate use of standardized tests:

Considerations in using individual norm-referenced tests. In general, assessment specialists have urged great caution in the use and interpretation of standardized tests of young children’s learning, especially in the absence of complementary evidence and when the stakes are potentially high (Jones, 2003; National Research Council, 1999; Scott-Little et al., 2003). All assessment activities should be guided by ethical standards of quality (AERA, APA, and NCME 1999). The issues are most pressing when individual norm-referenced tests are being considered as part of an assessment system. In those cases, the standards set forth in the joint statement of the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Center for Measurement in Education (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999) provide essential technical guidelines (NAEYC and NAECSSDE, 2003, p. 10).

Although controversy continues to surround the use of standardized tests with young children, it is important to remember that assessment can provide valuable information for teachers and parents. Attention is now being focused on the development of a new breed of instruments that are sensitive to young children’s developmental levels as well as to variations in cultural and linguistic background and to the use of comprehensive assessment systems that include evidence of young children’s development from standardized tests as well as well-designed classroom-based assessments. It is important, as well, for teacher preparation programs to include “assessment literacy” as a competence in early childhood programs.

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Jacqueline Jones

Standards

Early childhood stakeholders use the term *standards* to define a range of issues within the field, such as licensing standards, accreditation standards, standards of best practices, standards of quality, curriculum standards, performance standards, and proficiency standards. Moreover, the nation in which one is examining the issue of “standards” alters their definition, their history of development, their use by practitioners, and their effects on the lives of young children.

The term *standards* has particular significance within the context and the history of early childhood education (ECE) in the United States. Unlike many nations throughout the world, the United States does not have a national curriculum at any level of education. Local governments typically decide upon the educational policies, practices, and curricula of their communities. However, recent reform initiatives, such as the federal government’s reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2002, commonly referred to as the **No Child Left Behind Act** (NCLB), have shifted the power over decisions about **curriculum**, **assessment**, and student proficiency from the local community to the federal and state governments. Yet, many early childhood education services in the United States exist outside of the confines of public education policy, particularly programs serving children ages birth to five. This intertwining structure of early education services and education reform complicates a definition of standards and the standards-based accountability (SBA) systems in early childhood education.

Defining Standards

Three types or forms of standards are typically utilized in U.S. early childhood education. *Content standards* refer to the knowledge and skills that students are to attain at particular points within their early childhood career. *Performance standards* define what assessment measures are to be used to determine whether the child is acquiring the content standards. *Proficiency standards* indicate how well the student must perform on that assessment measure to be deemed proficient in acquiring the content standard.

Dissecting the range of content, performance, and proficiency standards that exists in the field of ECE depends upon where the program is physically located, its funding agency, and the range of children it serves. For example, President George W. Bush’s *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative requires state agencies that receive federal dollars through programs such as the **Child Care and Development Fund** (CCDF) to develop a set of voluntary early learning guidelines or content standards for literacy, language, and math activities for children ages three to

five. These early learning guidelines are to align with their state's K-12 content, performance, and proficiency standards (Office of the White House, 2002). State agencies currently decide how to implement these early learning standards and, in most instances, they affect only those programs that receive federal and/or state monies.

History

Understanding where these standards come from is as important as defining what they mean. Standards in early childhood education emerged from and in response to the trajectory of K-12 education reform.

While the idea of pursuing national curricula has existed in the United States since the Eisenhower Administration, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1984) spurred the first of three waves of reform that led to the current state of standards-based accountability reform in the United States. The importance of the NCEE's document is that it claimed that the United State's system of education was a systemic failure. To solve this problem, the commission recommended the implementation of rigorous academic standards and increased student performance requirements for such things as high school graduation and college admission.

While the Reagan Administration (1981–1989) reduced federal funding, support, and involvement in national education policy issues, the nation's governors, primarily in the South, through organizations such as the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) took up education reform and pursued initiatives that went beyond the recommendations of the NCEE. They promoted a second wave of reform that substituted less academic governance over local school districts, with increased accountability for student performance.

This rise in academic requirements and accountability measures that resulted from these two waves of reform intensified the educational demands of young children. In the latter half of the 1980s, school districts increased their use of readiness tests to determine whether students were prepared to enter kindergarten or first grade and districts escalated their curricular expectations for the early grades (e.g., Meisels, 1989). This emphasis on accountability and formal academic instruction in the early years led NAEYC to develop and eventually publish its guidelines for what it labels developmentally appropriate practices for young children (Bredekamp, 1987).

Even though publications from NAEYC and other research-based organizational responses (e.g., American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999) helped delineate the appropriate curricular and assessment expectations for young children, policy makers continued to position ECED as an educational tool to "ready" students for academic learning in K–12 schooling. For instance, President H. W. Bush (1989–1993) with the support of the NGA promoted national education goals, which included the call for voluntary national standards and assessments. While President Bush's **National Education Goals Panel's** (NEGP's) *America 2000* legislation failed, President Clinton incorporated these goals into

his administration's *Goals 2000* legislation. For both of these policies, the first goal was for all students by the year 2000 to start school ready to learn.

The *Goals 2000* legislation and the reauthorization of the federal government's Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1994 titled the *Improving American School Act* (IASA), reframed readiness through the context of standard-based accountability reform, the third wave of reform. Policies at the federal and state levels that followed this legislation led to the development of content, performance, and proficiency standards in various subject areas. Originally, this wave of reform promoted the implementation of "world-class" content standards and the use of performance-based assessments, which asks students to perform an activity or a task to demonstrate their understanding of the question. Controversy over cost and the reliability of the administration of performance-based assessments led to their demise. Multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer standardized tests replaced them. Similarly, the federal government began to examine the idea of including "opportunity to learn" standards with the *Goals 2000* legislation, which would set basic requirements for providing resources, funding, and training to insure that all students receive equal access to the conditions and resources for learning (Lewis, 1995). However, controversy over funding and the reach of the federal government into local issues defeated such proposals.

Current "Standards" Requirements in the Various States

In spite of continuing controversies, standards-based reforms at the state and local level now shape curricular and performance expectations of young children as early as age three. Moreover, the NCLB Act of 2002 escalated this demand for SBA reform in America's K-12 school systems. For instance, NCLB requires that by 2006 each state have content, performance, and proficiency standards for each grade level for grades 3-8 in reading and math. Moreover, states must have academic standards in science that cover grade spans 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12, and by 2007-2008, the state must administer annual assessments in science at least once in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12 to assess student proficiency levels. Failure to achieve NCLB's demands for improved annual yearly performance in reading, math, and science for all students in grades 3-8 will result in a series of sanctions for the school, the district, and the state while invoking a series of choice options for the students.

In addition to NCLB, some state departments of education (e.g., Texas and Florida) or local school districts (e.g., Chicago) use these standardized assessments to determine whether students meet that agency's proficiency standards. Third-grade students who fail to meet these states' or districts' proficiency standards can be retained. Such a result is referred to as a high-stakes consequence.

Thus, as this demand for annual yearly progress advances for students in K-12 education, schools, districts, and state departments of education will pay further attention to what types of learning experiences students are having before they enter the third grade.

For children ages 3-5, the type of standards that exists is dependent upon the specific program and its funding agency. For instance, beginning with their

2004–2005 biennium budget requests for federal funds through the CCDF block grant, state agencies had to include a plan for establishing voluntary early learning guidelines or content standards in literacy, language, pre-reading and numeracy skills for children ages 3 to 5 that align with the state’s K-12 standards. Currently, forty-three states have these early learning guidelines for preschool and prekindergarten programs in place. Additionally, in 2003, the *Good Start Grow Smart* initiative required agencies that operate **Head Start** programs to implement the Head Start Outcomes Framework, which includes 100 indicators of what children in Head Start should know and be able to do when they leave the program to enter kindergarten. Head Start also developed its controversial National Reporting System, which uses an assessment tool to measure students’ literacy and math skills.

Future of Standards in ECED

As standards-based reforms become a permanent fixture of early childhood education, organizations (e.g., the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** [NAEYC] and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialist in State Departments of Education, 2002; National Institute for Early Education Research) and early childhood researchers (e.g., Kagan and Scott-Little, 2004) have outlined guidelines for and raised issues about developing early learning standards for young children.

These organizations and researchers hope that by developing early learning standards stakeholders will make a sincere effort to develop a continuous system of ECED for the child from birth through elementary school. Unfortunately, implementing SBA reform in the current structure of ECED in the United States has the potential to split early childhood programs into two distinct systems: publicly funded systems that must adhere to state and federal SBA reforms and a private system that must only meet licensure regulations.

A primary concern of these organizations and researchers is that current policies, such as the Bush administration’s *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, fail to address all areas of a child’s development—cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional. Fostering a child’s emotional, regulatory, and social development skills is important in assisting that child to develop into a curious, confident, and persistent student in the classroom (Bowman et al., 2000).

Furthermore, standards fail to address such issues as the funding disparity that exists between early childhood programs and the fostering of professional development so that all children have high-quality early learning experiences. Research makes clear that such experiences provide an immediate and lasting effect on a child’s academic and life experiences.

Finally, the history of SBA reform raises the question over the use of assessment measures to evaluate students and programs. Currently K-12 SBA reforms use student performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs, teacher qualifications, and student learning. If ECED follows this trend, many fear SBA reform will resurrect the concerns that arose in the 1980s over appropriate curriculum, **readiness** tests, and approaches to **curriculum**, and stakeholders will fail

to use these assessments to foster child and program development (Kagan and Scott-Little, 2004).

The challenge for the field of early childhood education is to find a means to work with diverse stakeholders to ensure that these policies create a system that actually promotes continuous improvement for children birth through grade 3. Such a system that enables all students to reach the defined proficiency standards, assesses progress toward those benchmarks, and uses results to improve the performance of all members of the system, can only be developed if policy makers proceed with caution (Baker, 2002). *See also* Curriculum, Emotional Development; Standardized Tests and Early Childhood Education.

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Christopher Brown

State Licensing Standards

The licensing of early care and education programs in the United States is authorized by law in each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Licensing rules set each state's floor, or foundation, of acceptable quality. Programs below that floor will not be permitted to exist. Other types of standards defining other levels of quality also apply.

Each of the licensing rules is a right that children and parents have to a defined level of quality, backed up by the state in its policies for responding to complaints. The rules must be met by all private centers and home-based early childhood programs as defined by the state, regardless of subsidy. They are used to implement a basic consumer protection principle, "First, do no harm." Licensing policy is intended to reduce the risk of harm from fire, unsafe buildings or

equipment, spread of epidemic disease, any form of disaster, and developmental impairment.

The licensing laws often abolish early care and education programs altogether, then restore the right to operate such a program only to those who have state permission. Requiring a license is a powerful intervention by government on behalf of children and their families. Balancing this power, operators of programs have many rights to be treated fairly.

The word “standards” in this article is used generically to include all the varying terms that are used in connection with state law, federal law, and professional guidance. Mandatory standards for licensing are usually called “requirements” or “rules and regulations.” There is no common use of many other regulatory terms, such as guideline, registration, and certification, since some states and the federal government use them differently.

The Licensing Rules

The licensing law in each state specifies what rules may be written by the agency. The rules cover all aspects of a program—building and grounds, equipment, qualifications of teachers, directors, and family child care providers; health and safety procedures, the program of activities, schedule, developmental curriculum, discipline, and the role of parents.

Prior to granting a license, the states usually require a building safety inspection and approval, a public health inspection and approval, and initial criminal records checks of licensees and their employees. These baseline approvals linked to the license are part of the necessary floor. The licensing rules themselves are usually established as “minimums,” which means “at least.” They are not program specifications because programs are encouraged and expected to go beyond what is required. They are not ideals because there are serious penalties for failing to meet them. Licensing requirements differ from other types of standards because they have the force of law. As with any law, enforcement requires strong public support.

Most States rewrite their rules fairly frequently. Since they do not all make their changes in the same month or year, any comparison of the states’ rules must be made as of the same date to be accurate. Comparative data that are in print are probably incorrect. Updated comparisons are posted on the Web site of the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) (<http://nccic.org>.)

Task forces or advisory groups within the state reach consensus on proposed rules, usually based on new research findings, changes in the field of practice, and comparative data on what other states are doing. Their consensus-building process is essential to enforcement of the rules. Rule-writing groups compare their state’s rules with current rules in other states to identify where their own rules need strengthening, and to see how their own state ranks with other states. The rules themselves are posted on the Web site of the National Resource Center for the Health and Safety of Children in Child Care (NRC) (<http://nrc>). Over time, the level of quality in the field tends to improve as a result of funding, accreditation, training, college scholarships, and consumer demand.

When new rules are being considered, many existing programs may already meet a higher standard. When a proposed new rule is controversial, the states may grandfather the rule (permit existing programs to waive it), or they may grandmother the rule (set a later date by which all programs must meet it.) The rules most likely to create controversy are those that affect cost, particularly staffing ratios, group size, and the qualifications of staff.

Licensing as policy is typically American, with its emphasis on regulating private services. Rather than operating services by government, and rather than relying entirely on forces in the private market to create an acceptable supply of services, these state laws have created a third possibility, a *regulated market*. Early care and education in the United States is not affordable for all children. However, children at all income levels are protected through licensing.

Levels of quality in early care and education programs

<i>Types of Regulation</i>	<i>Standards Used</i>	<i>Levels of Quality</i>
Continuous improvement	Expert Guidance Standards Curriculum Guidelines, Departments of Education	Excellent level to guide continuous improvement
Credential	Standards for credential for roles in the field	Good to excellent
Accreditation by professional organization	Standards for accreditation	Good to excellent
Tiered funding	Funding source establishes two or more levels of quality	Good
Rate setting	Enable programs to meet funding standards	Good
Quality rating	Research rating scale	Rating scores from good enough to excellent
Licensing and other required approvals	Minimum (“at least”) level of quality acceptable to the state	Good enough to reduce risk of harm.

Different types of standards

<i>Type of Standard</i>	<i>Applied To?</i>	<i>By What Agency</i>	<i>Using What Power?</i>
Licensing Requirements	All children in all programs defined in the licensing law	State licensing agency, sometimes delegated to county	Power of the people delegated from the Legislature
Funding Specifications	All programs receiving a particular funding stream	Administering agency of the funding stream	Contract agreement
Program accreditation	Programs meeting a higher professional standard	National professional organization, or state	Contract agreement that allows the program to display the accreditation

<i>Type of Standard</i>	<i>Applied To?</i>	<i>By What Agency</i>	<i>Using What Power?</i>
Tiered levels of quality	Programs recognized at a higher level than licensing	Licensing agency, funding agency, or a collaboration	Contract agreement with source of subsidy or quality initiative
Teacher license	All teachers in public schools	State Department of Education	DOE ability to enforce without waivers varies
Specialized early childhood credential	Staff who earn the credential	National Department of Labor; Child Development Associate (CDA); or state credential for a role	Power or the reputation of the credential. May be a licensing requirement
Higher education degrees	Directors or teachers in early childhood programs in states that require degrees	Degree granted by accredited colleges, checked by licensing agency	Delegated power under the licensing law

Coverage

In 1994, states licensed 117,284 centers, and 300,032 homes. If a program is not required to be licensed, but receives state or federal dollars, the state may require it either to apply for a voluntary license, or meet the licensing rules, or meet higher standards to receive funding.

All states cover full-day centers, but a few do not cover part-day programs. School system, public, private, or even faith-based schools are usually not covered by the licensing agency. The states' Departments of Education have been considered responsible for their quality.

Fourteen states exempt faith-based early childhood centers that apply for and are granted an exemption. Most exempt faith-based programs do have to meet some state standards for health and safety. Only one state exempts programs that are accredited by or are members of an organization that has its own accreditation standards.

Large family child care homes, usually seven or more unrelated children with more than one caregiver, are covered in most states. Licensing is seldom applied to small family child care homes when only one or two children are included. The caregiver's own children are usually counted in the number. Care by a child's parent or relatives is not required to be licensed, although funding standards may apply to it.

Ratios and Group Sizes

Since 1986, states have moved toward greater uniformity in their staffing requirements for the youngest age groups. For children at age nine months, the

child/staff ratio in 2004 is 4:1 in thirty-five states, with a group size limited to eight in twenty states. No state has a ratio greater than 6:1. In 1986, ratios varied up to 12:1; and thirty-five states either permitted groups larger than eight or did not regulate group size at all. Ratios varied up to 12:1. The shift to smaller ratios for infants has been gradual, and the shift to setting limits on group size has been even slower. There are still eleven states that do not limit the size of groups of nine-month-old infants.

Toddler staffing patterns have also been improved across the states, although not as rapidly as those for infants. However, as children become two, there is cause for concern that staffing may not adequately protect children in all states. When children are twenty-seven months old, there is wide variability of rules. There is no ratio for children at this age that is the same in more than nine states. Other states divide in more or less equal numbers, ratios of 8:1; 7:1, 6:1; 5:1 and 10:1.

There is a little greater consistency in staffing requirements for four-year-olds. The largest number of states, seventeen, require a group size of twenty with two caregivers. Twenty-three states permit groups of thirty or more. In most states, the staffing requirements result in at least two teachers/caregivers in each group. However, in fourteen of the states, one qualified person without an assistant can be solely in charge of fifteen or more four-year-olds.

Alternative Qualifications

Staff qualifications in state licensing rules for early childhood programs usually require one or both of two different types of professional preparation: (1) preservice qualifications for specific roles: degrees, courses, credit hours, or credentials prior to employment in the role; (2) specified number of hours of training for all staff in all roles every year.

The content of both pre-service and annual continuing education is primarily child development or early childhood education. Two-year degrees with that specialization are offered at many public community colleges or technical colleges, but four-year degree programs with early childhood specialization are more rare. At the four-year level, the early childhood degrees are likely to be in private colleges, making articulation with the two-year programs difficult.

A single requirement of a four-year degree in child development would have to be widely waived. There are not enough college degree programs to meet this specification. States sometimes accept degrees in “related fields.” Other states may require graduates in related fields to have course credits in early care and education and/or direct experience with young children as well as the degree.

States usually identify a number of alternative ways of meeting their required qualifications for roles. Some of the alternatives permit some direct service experience to substitute for some of the academic qualifications. States use these alternatives both to avoid granting waivers and also to ensure that individuals have knowledge of children younger than kindergarten age.

Annual ongoing training may be counted by teachers as pre-service training for the director role, or by assistants as pre-service training for teaching or other

roles; but it is not, by definition, pre-service preparation for the role a person already fills. Only thirteen states require twenty or more hours of training every year. A handful of states require a larger number of hours every other year, so that one credit-bearing course could be used to meet the rule. Community-based training is beginning to be offered for credit.

The qualifications for directors are strongly focused on child growth and development and early childhood education. Only twenty-six states, roughly half, even mention additional administrative content among their qualifications for training for directors. Seven of them have developed a director credential.

The minimum alternative qualification is the least required amount of academic coursework, or specialized education in early care and education. Direct experience with young children under qualified supervision is not counted as an educational pre-service qualification, because it is not an educational qualification.

For directors, the range of alternative ways of qualifying, across the states, is from two ways to eighteen ways. One state has only one alternative. Qualifications in early care and education are higher for directors than for teachers. Only three states set no educational requirements for directors. Some states set more stringent pre-service qualifications for directors of larger centers. The range of the minimum alternatives for directors is as follows:

Minimum alternative director qualifications, 2004

<i>Minimum Pre-service Educational Alternative</i>	<i>Number of States</i>	<i>% of States</i>
Pre-service only	6	12%
Pre-service and annual ongoing training	32	62%
Only annual ongoing training	10	19%

Pre-service minimums may be college degree or certificate programs, courses or credits, or clock hours of training. The highest academic alternatives for directors are as follows:

Highest alternative director qualifications, 2004

<i>Maximum Pre-service Educational Alternative</i>	<i>Number of States</i>	<i>% of States</i>
MA/MS/PhD	6	12%
BA/BS	29	57%
AA/AS	4	8%
CDA credential	0	0%
Specified number of college credits short of degree	7	13%
State director credential	4	8%
Ongoing annual hours of training only	1	2%
	51	100%

For teachers, too, there were a number of alternatives, ranging to eight options. Twenty-nine states had either no academic qualifications, or required only a high school degree with direct experience or basic orientation for teachers. Some states link an alternative to a size of center, that is, requiring that larger centers must employ some percentage or some required number.

Minimum alternative qualifications, all teachers 2004

<i>Minimum Alternative</i>	<i>Number Of States</i>	<i>Percent Of States</i>
Bachelor's degree	1	02 %
Associate's degree	0	0
Child Development Associate	11	21%
College credit hours	6	12%
Clock hours prior to employment	2	04%
Two-year vocational early childhood program	3	05%
No training qualifications other than basic orientation	29	57%
	51 states	100%

Maximum alternative pre-service qualifications, teachers and master teachers 2004

<i>Maximum Academic Alternative</i>	<i>Number Of States</i>	<i>% Of States</i>
MA/MS	3	5%
BA/BS or "higher" degree	16	31%
AS	5	9%
CDA credential	4	8%
Specified number of college credits short of degree	8	15%
State DOE certification as public school teacher or other	5	9%
State Credential or Approved Training Programs	12	23%
Ongoing only	51	100%

Fourteen states identify two levels of teachers. They may call the more qualified teachers group supervisor, lead teachers, or other name, and require one of them for a specified number of children, such as every forty-five children. These "master teachers" are not included in the table of minimum alternatives because they are not the lowest alternative for a teacher.

A small number of states now issue an official certificate of some kind to teachers and directors in licensed programs so that their qualifications are portable to other licensed programs. At least twenty-two states have established registries that track a person's changing qualifications. Five states mention some state-level credential or approved training program among the maximum alternatives for teachers. Teacher licenses are seldom mentioned.

Tiered Strategies

A recent approach both to personnel qualifications and to program standards is to define different levels of quality, and to offer supports and incentives to help programs and their employees move to higher levels of quality. Thirty-five states have adopted tiered quality improvement strategies for centers, and thirty-two have adopted them for family child care homes. Some examples of innovation, implemented differently in different states, are

- state financial support for accreditation;
- bonus incentives for teachers to add to their qualifications;
- scholarship help to individuals employed in early care and education programs;
- funding incentives for programs to reach defined higher levels of quality;
- new credentials, for infants/toddlers, directors, and teachers;
- registries of personnel and their updated qualifications;
- rated licenses; and
- tiered funding levels in subsidy policy.

These new policies represent an enormous stride forward for states in implementing both their licensing rules and their funding standards through interagency collaboration. The first few states to develop differentiated rates identified two levels of program quality: the required licensing level and accreditation. Finding that the gap between the two was difficult for programs to bridge, some of the states invented middle levels of quality that take into account the record of compliance and set progressively lower ratios and higher staff qualifications.

The higher levels of quality are not enforced through the use of licensing power, but rely on contract agreements. A program that cannot maintain its level will keep its license, but may not keep its quality rating or its funding level. To implement this kind of policy, someone must go to the program, determine their level, and connect them to sources of help. The early childhood licensing staff may be the visitors to recommend approval as meeting a higher level, in addition to their licensing responsibilities, or states may design other models for implementing these policies.

Case Loads for Licensors

Compliance with licensing rules is significantly higher if someone from the licensing office routinely inspects the licensed center or home. In some states the case loads are so high that it is unlikely that the licensee will be visited during the period covered by the license. In other states, an adequate number of staff are able to visit regularly, issue correction orders, follow up to see that corrections were made, and investigate complaints.

Most licensees want to meet the licensing rules. When visits are rare, they may slip out of compliance when distracted by other urgent issues. There is a very small number of programs that have no intention of complying with the rules. They may enroll more children than their license permits, and conceal broken equipment and fire hazards. They will be out of compliance, come into

compliance temporarily after a licensing visit, and then fail to comply again and again. Unless there is adequate staff and legal power to follow up, this small group of noncomplying programs will be permitted to continue to create risks for children.

Examples of states with large case loads of centers are Massachusetts, Maine, and Minnesota. States with much smaller case loads are Florida, South Carolina, and Oklahoma. These states have employed enough staff to carry out their licensing responsibilities, and also to inspect for tiered levels of quality. By creating a single system for visiting programs, the state can have adequate staff to enforce the licensing rules and also to implement funding levels and quality incentives.

History

The first of the states to write a licensing law for children's services was Pennsylvania in 1883. Prior to that time, many states had voluntary standards that were advisory, not mandatory. Pennsylvania pioneered the first real licensing law for children. Other states began to adopt this enforceable type of law. Early care and education programs were not subsidized other than by private charity.

In most states infants and toddlers were prohibited altogether from programs until the mid-1960s. As these states began to permit programs to include these vulnerable age groups, they set ratios and group size low to avoid plentiful but harmful services.

However, other states already had a large number of existing programs with high numbers of infants per staff, and large groups. As these states tried to write more stringent rules, existing programs feared that rules would add higher costs to parents and reduce the supply of services. It took many years for states to resolve issues between costs, supply, and potential harm.

In 1962, most of the states without such laws enacted one in anticipation that the federal government would require it as a condition for funding. There has been a clear emphasis on child development in the licensing rules for all children, stressing the inseparability of strands of cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development since the 1930s.

Research on the effectiveness of programs for poor children received widespread public attention in the 1960s. Head Start was created in 1965 as a federally managed comprehensive program for poor children and their families, with its own performance standards. In 1967, open-ended federal funding under the Social Security Act became available for child care. Standards for funding became an issue.

In the 1967 Social Security Act, the Congress mandated "a common set of program standards" for all programs receiving federal dollars. Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements (FIDCR) were written. FIDCR history was characterized by controversy, revised versions, increasing distrust among advocates, and decreasing numbers of participating federal agencies.

Part of the controversy stemmed from confusion over the difference between state licensing and federal funding standards. Some of the licensed programs feared that FIDCR would apply to all programs for all children, without funding. To add to their confusion, child advocates wanted the federal government to

set standards for all children, rather than funding standards for some children. However, federal interagency standards were very clearly standards for funding.

Debates became polarized, pitting “quality” federal standards versus “minimum state standards.” Federal standards were finally abolished by the Congress. Later, in 1991, Congress mandated that federal Child Care and Development funds must be spent in programs that meet “health and safety” standards. More important, they also mandated that a percentage of the funds be set aside for “quality improvement.”

Trends

The federal funds for quality improvements under CCDBG led to a decade of innovative new policies and interagency collaborative efforts. Thirty-five states have implemented innovative policies that recognize a progression of levels of quality. In at least some of the states, debate has moved from polarized arguments over “quality” versus “minimum” to defining levels of quality, and collaborating across agencies to help programs move to higher levels. Licensing offices have moved from exclusive focus on baseline permits to a broader state vision for levels of quality implemented collaboratively.

In some states, the laws for licensing now express the states’ broader vision. Moving from licensing to state goals for quality goes beyond the power delegated for licensing, but not beyond the power of the state. Agencies that administer child care funds can offer incentives in contract agreements.

Issues for the Future

The peculiarities of U.S. policy, with licensing for all children but subsidy only for poor families, will continue to affect their implementation. It is clear that a collaboration between licensing and funding policy can result in better licensing and also higher levels of quality. It is an open question, and probably a question to the Congress, whether quality initiatives in the future will be for all children, or whether a narrower focus on poor children will dominate.

Federal funding for future quality initiatives is uncertain after 2004. If funds continue, most states will create or continue their innovations, and new models will emerge for implementing them. Without continued available funding, these initiatives could lose momentum at least temporarily. States that are paying more for higher quality will badly need to create or improve accountable ways of determining the quality level of programs.

Professional development planning groups in the states have made substantial progress in creating career pathways and a lattice across all the different roles that are filled by early childhood professionals. There is work to be done in some states to integrate these policies with the teacher license granted by the Department of Education for one of the roles.

Progress has been made in articulating levels of education from entry level up to the two-year degree. Articulation between that degree and a four-year degree in the same field is much more difficult. Higher education will need to offer more

degree programs, better articulation and much better advisement for those who work with children at these younger ages.

Further Readings: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for the Health and Safety of Children in Child Care. (2002) *Caring for our children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*, 2nd ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: AAP; Collins, Judy, Sarah LeMoine, and Gwen Morgan. (2004). *Child Care Licensing Trends*. Vienna, VA: NCCIC. Class, Norris. Levels of Standards. Presentation at NAEYC Conference. Seattle, Washington, November 1973; Class, Norris E., and Richard Orton (1980). Day care regulation: The limits of licensing. *Young Children* (September), 12-16; Gormley, W. T. (1991). Day care in a federal system. *Social Service Review* (December), 582-596; Lazar, Irving R., H. M. Darlington, J. Royce Murray, and A. Snipper (1982). "Lasting effects of early education: A report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies." *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 47(1): Serial No. 201; Morgan, G. (1996). Licensing and accreditation: How much quality is quality? In Susan Bredekamp and Barbara A. Willer, eds., *NAEYC accreditation: A decade of learning and the years ahead*. pp. 129-138; USHEW, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (1977). Policy Issues in Day care: *Summaries of 21 papers*.

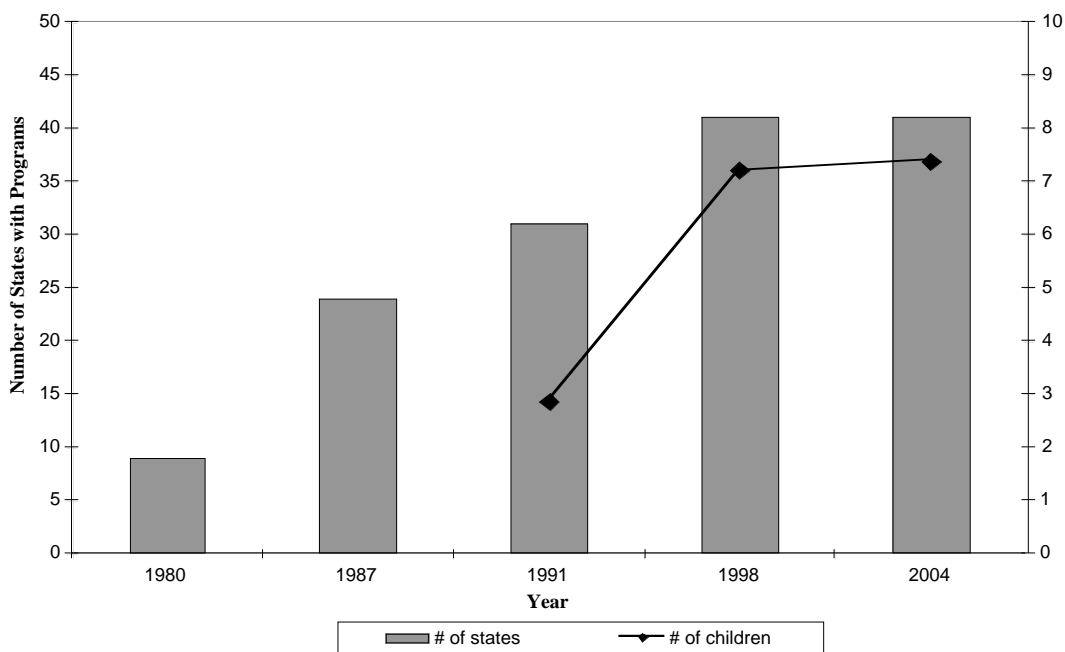
Gwen Morgan

State Prekindergarten Programs

State prekindergarten programs are state-funded initiatives in the United States that provide classroom-based early education services to young children prior to kindergarten entry. The structure and focus of these programs vary among the states. In most cases they are voluntary preschool programs provided free of charge to eligible children three to four years of age. Although usually administered by the state Department of Education, in many states prekindergarten programs may be located in public or private schools, community-based organizations, within Head Start programs or in other settings. Some states have chosen to create their own prekindergarten program (e.g., North Carolina's "More at Four") while others have contributed state funds to supplement federal Head Start funding. Both approaches are considered state prekindergarten programs since they are state-funded educational programs for three- to four-year-olds. In each case, state-funded programs increase the supply of early education programs in the state.

During the last twenty years, many states in the United States have adopted or expanded their prekindergarten program to promote children's school readiness and eventual academic success (as depicted in the figure). Prior to 1980, only seven states funded programs. By the early 1990s, this number had grown to twenty-seven states serving 290,000 children. By 1998, forty states had prekindergarten programs, serving more than 700,000 children. Less growth has been seen in recent years, which may be due to the budget crises states are facing.

A primary rationale for both the development and expansion of state prekindergarten programs has been the promotion of children's school readiness and later school success. Research on school readiness and early intervention programs has



Growth in State PreKindergarten Programs (1980–2004)

Sources: Adams and Sandfort (1994); Barnett et al. (2003); NIEER (2004). Data on the exact number of children enrolled in state prekindergarten programs was not available for 1980 or 1987.

fueled this national attention. In particular, studies of children entering kindergarten have found that family risk factors (e.g., low maternal education, welfare dependency, low income) are associated with lower proficiency in early reading, math, and general knowledge. This is consistent with earlier findings that low-income children are less likely to arrive at school ready and are more likely to be educationally disadvantaged or have difficulty in school. For many policy makers, this learning gap upon school entry indicates a need to intervene earlier in children's lives. Evidence from early intervention, such as the Perry Preschool Program, Abecedarian Project, and Chicago Child-Parent Centers, demonstrates that one way to better prepare children for kindergarten is to offer school readiness skills in high-quality preschool settings. This approach has been demonstrated to be cost-effective, producing far greater gains for society than the cost of the investment, and thereby providing an economic incentive to invest early in children's lives (see Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

This push for school readiness was manifest in national policy in 1989 when President Bush and the nation's governors announced six national education goals, the first being, "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." This goal included three objectives—one of which was as follows: "All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school." And the states have responded. Today, the vast majority of states fund a prekindergarten program.

Yet most state programs serve only a small percentage of children or only fund a part-day program that fails to meet the needs of parents who work full-time. A recent survey of state prekindergarten programs by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) (Barnett et al., 2004) concluded that only 10 percent of the nation's three- to four-year-olds were enrolled in state prekindergarten programs and that the vast majority of these children are four-year-olds in the year prior to kindergarten.

Most states do not offer access to all preschool-aged children, choosing to target their prekindergarten programs to children in low-income families or those who have other factors that place them at greatest risk of educational difficulties and school failure. A few states, however, have established or are taking steps toward establishing universal prekindergarten. For example, Georgia currently provides funding for all four-year olds, while Oklahoma reimburses school districts (that choose to provide prekindergarten) for all four-year-olds. New York has also established a universal prekindergarten program. However, the program has not received funding increases as originally scheduled, so it generally remains available only to children in low-income families and children who have other risk factors.

NIEER concluded that all states need to improve their quality standards for prekindergarten programs. For example, only 18 states required prekindergarten teachers to have the four-year college degree that every state requires of kindergarten teachers and that has been recommended by the National Research Council for every preschool education classroom. NIEER also found that although total state spending for state-funded prekindergarten exceeded \$2.5 billion in 2002–2003, three-fifths of this spending was from five states—California, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. Also, in most states, spending per child was too low to ensure quality.

The NIEER report identified three states with exemplary prekindergarten programs: Georgia, Oklahoma, and New Jersey. Interestingly, each state uses a different approach to finance and structure its program. Georgia offers preschool in a range of early childhood settings to all four-year-old children, funded by lottery funds, but does not require that teachers have a bachelor's degree. Oklahoma has a universal program for four-year-olds that is based on district-level provision of prekindergarten. As a result, the program is not available everywhere in the state. All preschool teachers are certified and receive the same salaries and benefits as other public school teachers. State funding is provided through the regular education funding formula, which lends financial stability to the program. New Jersey's "Abbott District" preschool program provides prekindergarten services to both three- and four-year-olds in the state's largest and most disadvantaged school districts. The program is the combined result of a court order and legislation. The "Abbott District" preschool program requires the highest standards in the nation (e.g., a certified teacher who is paid a public school salary, and an assistant teacher in each class of fifteen children). New Jersey also provides funds for half-day preschool to 102 other school districts, with somewhat lower quality standards.

Other states continue to expand their state prekindergarten programs. In 2006, the majority of state legislatures increased funding for their state's prekindergarten

program—resulting in a cumulative \$14.1 billion across the fifty states and the District of Columbia (PreKnow, 2006). It is the hope of many child advocates that these state prekindergarten programs will continue to be critical building blocks of the early care and education system in the United States. *See also* Preschool/Prekindergarten Programs.

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Elizabeth Rigby

Steiner, Rudolf (1861–1925)

Rudolf Steiner is best known as the founder of the Waldorf School movement (see **Waldorf Education**). Arising from the social chaos of post-World War I Germany, Waldorf Education sought to establish a school, open to all children, that would set a foundation for social and cultural renewal. Steiner also made fundamental contributions to the fields of medicine, social theory, art, movement, pharmacology, agriculture, architecture, and theology.

Steiner was born in 1861 in Kraljevek, now known as Croatia, to Austrian parents. In 1889 he moved to Weimar, Germany, where he edited the scientific works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In Weimar he was able to meet many of the prominent artists, thinkers, and cultural figures of his time. After receiving a Doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Rostock in Germany in 1891, Dr. Steiner lectured extensively on a new science of the spirit, which he called Anthroposophy (wisdom or knowledge of man). Anthroposophy attempts to generate a “science of the spirit,” broadening materialistic views of nature and humankind to learn to perceive the forces that work within and behind them. In 1894, Steiner wrote one of his seminal works, *A Philosophy of Freedom* (published in German as *Die Philosophie der Freiheit*). In this book, he sets out to describe how the human ability to think creatively and intuitively can be a liberatory act, allowing us to move beyond mere materialism.

Following the chaos and destruction of World War I, Steiner began lecturing and writing about social renewal. From 1919 until his death in 1925 he lectured to a wide variety of groups across Europe. He guided the renewal of many areas

of human, social, cultural, and scientific activities, including art, education, sciences, social life, medicine, pharmacology, therapies, agriculture, architecture, and theology. Steiner's guidance resulted in many practical endeavors such as sculpting and painting influenced by Goethe's theories of color and form, Waldorf Education, the Camphill movement, biodynamic agriculture, and Anthroposophic medicine and remedies. Rudolf Steiner helped to develop new techniques for painting, modeling, sculpting, and a new form of movement known as eurythmy—a way to make speech and music visible. His lectures about social life led to the formation of the worldwide Camphill movement. First established in Scotland in 1940 and based on Steiner's ideas, there are now more than ninety Camphill communities in twenty-two countries around the world. Camphill communities house and work therapeutically with children, youth, and adults who have developmental disabilities. Volunteer coworkers live, learn, and work together with disabled people in a self-sustaining community. Residents live in extended family settings where relationships are cultivated. Volunteers and residents perform meaningful work together such as candle making, stained glass, bookbinding, weaving, woodworking, and biodynamic farming. Biodynamic agriculture is based on a series of lectures by Rudolf Steiner encouraging farmers to work actively with the forces of nature, free of chemicals. Lectures by Dr. Steiner inspired the development of a new practice of medicine. This holistic approach attempts to work out of an integrated image of the whole human being in illness and health.

In 1919, Rudolf Steiner was asked to give a series of lectures to help guide the opening of a new school for children of the workers of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany. Steiner subsequently became the director of this first "Waldorf" school, a position he held until his death in 1925. There are now more than 600 Waldorf schools all over the world. Waldorf education attempts to educate the whole child: head, heart, and hands. Through imbuing lessons with each of these elements children are helped in developing their own innate capacities. On the basis of Steiner's notions of child development, Waldorf kindergartens are distinctive in their belief that early childhood is a time for the development of the physical organism rather than the cognitive abilities of the young child. Waldorf kindergartens and nursery classes are founded upon Steiner's recognition that the child absorbs a host of sense impressions and naturally imitates them. The attitudes of caregivers as well as the physical environment have profound influences upon the child. Thus, a great deal of care is given to create a warm, nurturing environment filled with objects from the natural world. The curriculum reflects the rhythms of the natural world rather than the intellectual work of learning to read and write. Teachers of Waldorf kindergartens and nursery classes are specifically trained in the development of the young child, with a strong emphasis on the importance of story, song, and movement for the nurturance of the young child.

Rudolf Steiner left a huge body of work. During his lifetime he wrote twenty books, gave over six thousand lectures (most of which were transcribed and published), and wrote many essays. Initiatives stimulated by his insights can be found in many diverse disciplines in countries all over the world. Steiner died in 1925.

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Eric Gidseg

Subsidies. See Child Care Subsidies and Tax Provisions

Symbolic Languages

One of the central tenets of sociocultural theory is the vital importance of symbols as they mediate relationships between the mind and the environment (Bruner, 1990; Kozulin, 1990). When educators speak of the symbolic languages of children they are referring to the ways in which children make visible, or represent, their ideas. A language may be defined by its uses: to express, to communicate, and to work things through. Talk, for example, may be used to make one's thoughts and feelings known to the self and others (express and communicate). Talk is but one of many languages available to us. We can also express and explore ideas through graphic languages such as drawing, painting, sculpting with clay or wire, weaving, construction, and shadow, and through more temporal languages such as movement and music. Early Childhood educators are learning from **Reggio Emilia** that children are able to articulate and explore their most profound ideas best when they are able to represent those ideas in those many languages, the "one hundred languages of children" (Malaguzzi, 1998).

Though some call "paint" or "clay" or "drawing" a language, that is an incomplete, and therefore inaccurate, characterization. Paint as an entity is not a language, nor is drawing, wire, or clay. They are media only . . . until the child *uses* them as symbolic languages . . . to express, communicate, or figure things out. Examples of children using drawing as a language might be the five-year-old who draws her memory of the merry-go-round she rode at the amusement park the day before; the boy who is fascinated with airplanes draws what he knows about the different types of airplanes; the six-year-old who has been thinking about shadows draws a series of theories about how shadows work, beginning with her idea that all shadows occur in daylight and on the ground.

A child must know a medium well before it becomes a language for her. Children come to know a medium through many experiences with it. Often in early encounters with a medium a child explores, testing what the medium will do, how it feels, how it looks, and how it responds to her actions (learning the "affordances" of the medium; Forman, 1994). Such exploration might look like scribble. Or it might be more of a "formula" representation. For example, a child who knows how to draw houses well, who is comfortable drawing houses, and who feels no need at present to challenge herself when drawing houses might

draw house after identical house after identical house as she learns a new type of pen, or she might translate this familiar subject into paint to explore the paint, and so forth. As the child learns what a particular medium will do, how it will respond to her actions upon it, and what it will allow her to do, she acquires proficiency, confidence, and understanding about the medium. Eventually we see her begin to use that medium to represent that which she does not yet know how to represent, or to explain her thinking about a particular idea through the medium. It is then that we might say the child is using that medium as a symbolic language. Such familiarity with media requires both frequent access to the media and time. This is why it often does not satisfy either child or teacher when a teacher asks a child to represent a new idea with an unfamiliar medium. Over time, as children come to know the media and to use them as languages they also learn to value the media as tools for making their ideas visible, discovering, for example, that some are better suited to representing certain ideas than others.

Children are full of ideas, theories about how the world works, and full of imagination. It is not only satisfying to represent those ideas, theories, and imaginings, but also vital to the learning process. When children represent an idea, either through reading, writing, or talking, through graphic media, or through more temporal media such as music and movement, their understanding of the idea grows. High school and college students take notes during lectures, partly so that they will have them as referents when studying. But the act of taking the notes itself . . . representing what the professor is saying . . . also supports the student's making sense of what he is hearing. In the same way, every time young children draw, paint, sculpt, construct, and act out their ideas, they develop a deeper understanding of those ideas (as well, of course, as honing their proficiency with and control of the media). Understanding grows even further when children represent an idea in multiple languages. For example, to draw a chair one must consider angles, number of legs, and the size of the parts of a chair in relation to each other (the legs all reach the baseline, for example). But when trying to construct or sculpt a chair in three dimensions, one must also consider how the chair manages to stand. When a child represents a thing, he "defamiliarizes" it—makes it new for himself, in a way. According to Giovanni Piazza, studio teacher (atelierista) in Reggio Emilia, this gives the child more images of the subject of her representation, and, he says, we want children to "have more images of one thing, a wealth of images" (Rabitti 1994). Symbolic representation also has a fundamental role in small-group project work. Often the foundation upon which such collaborative work rests is spoken language. Children pose their ideas, challenge each others' ideas, negotiate point and counterpoint, make plans, and so forth—in words. However, sometimes words seem to be inadequate to the idea at hand. As Loris Malaguzzi points out, "graphic representation is a tool of communication much simpler and clearer than words" (1998, p. 92). Children might draw or otherwise represent graphically an idea that they have struggled to express verbally. They might draw to understand more completely the idea of another. While the *act* of representing an idea can help clarify it for the individual, the *product* of the representation can help others understand her idea, and it can support the development of a shared, larger idea.

Teachers can support children's use of symbolic languages by doing the following:

- Providing good quality materials for representation. For example, paintbrushes in a variety of sizes and with a variety of brush tips can give children the control they need to make their ideas visible. Paper that both stands up to the rigors of different media and that makes the representation look its best is more likely to call to children than, for example, newsprint. Real potters' clay (e.g., white or red low fire clay) supports more detailed representation than does, for example, play-dough.
- Making sure the *media are accessible* to the children as they need it. Teachers will want to keep in mind that children may need many, many experiences with a medium before they use it as a language. Many teachers store media in well-organized low shelves so that children can both find and reach what they need when they need it.
- Providing *time* for children to invest energy and emotion in their representation, and to navigate the problems they encounter as they work to make their ideas visible.
- *Supporting* children's learning about representation directly. A child may have a desire to represent before he has the necessary techniques or control or perhaps even knowledge of the media to accomplish his goals. Without support the child may come to expect less of himself and resort to coping strategies that don't necessarily help him learn to represent his ideas, for example choosing to draw only what he knows how to draw or throwing attempt after attempt away in frustration. A sensitive teacher can recognize the dichotomy for the child, work to help the child make his idea visible, and even help him develop strategies for the next time around.
- *Displaying* children's representation prominently and with care, sending the message, "Your work is important to us all." Teachers can also make children's representation public by taking it to a class meeting, inviting others to seek out the artist for advice if they would like to try something similar, thereby affirming the artist and inspiring his classmates.
- Supporting each child's establishment of a "satisfaction bar," and the disposition to persevere until she is satisfied that she (or the group with which she is working) has made her/their mental image visible. The teacher's response to the child's work can send a strong message. Because one goal is to encourage children to revisit their work, teachers might respond with "What's happening here?" rather than evaluative comments about the child's work and "Are you satisfied?" rather than, for example, "Are you finished?" Noticing when the child needs adult support for technique, tools, or moral support also helps the child sustain effort toward making her idea visible.
- Encouraging the *flow of ideas* in the classroom. As children represent their ideas teachers can encourage others inspired by those ideas, note the evolution of the idea as its representation flows from one child to another, and pay attention to the way such ideas become part of the shared language of the classroom. For example, Mary draws a king and queen. Nearby Charles and Jamal, inspired by Mary's drawing, begin to make paper crowns. Others join them. The teacher notes this flow of ideas and makes the children's work public in a class meeting. Later that day the teacher notices that a small group is making a castle for kings and queens on the block platform. King-and-queen play draws in more children over many days, and soon it

becomes part of the group's shared language and a way of sustaining relationship for the children. All this happens in a classroom where children are encouraged to represent their ideas, have learned how to do so, and where the flow of ideas from one child to another is treasured.

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Pam Oken-Wright

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TANF. *See* Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

Tax Provisions. *See* Child Care Subsidies and Tax Provisions

Teacher Certification/Licensure

Teacher certification or licensure is the process by which individuals become fully qualified to teach. In the field of teacher education, the terms certification and licensure are typically used synonymously. For the purposes of this entry, teacher certification will be used. Teacher certification is the responsibility of each state, province, and territory, resulting in different certification requirements across states, provinces, and territories. Certification requirements are delineated in legislation, with oversight and implementation by a designated governmental entity. Although variation exists, certification requirements typically specify the age range or grade level for which the individual is being certified, the standards that the individual must demonstrate to be qualified to teach, and the measures used to document that the standards have been mastered. Some states require individuals to complete an induction year before becoming fully certified.

Certification may be at the initial or advanced level. Initial certification refers to the initial license to practice as a professional in the field, whether that license is obtained at the undergraduate or graduate level. Advanced certification is obtained at the graduate or inservice level and is based on more in-depth study in the chosen field. The focus of this entry is initial certification.

For over a decade, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), and the **Division for Early Childhood** of the **Council for Exceptional Children** (DEC/CEC) have jointly advocated that states develop free-standing certificates for educators working with all children birth through age eight, with the age range and standards for certificates being congruent across states in order to promote reciprocity (Hyson, 2003; Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith and McLean, 2000). Other professional organizations, such as the **Association for Childhood Education International** (ACEI), Association

for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have also developed recommendations urging creation of uniform and distinctive early childhood certification.

Early childhood education (ECE) and **early childhood special education (ECSE)** are distinct fields and thus, certification separate from elementary, middle grades, and secondary certification is essential for several reasons. First, theory and research support the early childhood years as a unique developmental phase that has implications for developing and implementing effective learning environments, curriculum, and assessment. A distinct body of research also provides guidance as to how children with disabilities birth through age eight develop and learn and thus, what adaptations may be necessary in early childhood settings. Families play a significant role in early childhood programs, with the family and home being the primary context for learning and development. Understanding cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as the importance of collaboration with families and other professionals are central to effective early childhood services. In addition, the preference for early childhood services in inclusive settings and natural environments requires that all early childhood educators possess knowledge and skills in working with young children with disabilities and their families.

Second, early childhood educators work in a variety of settings (e.g., **child care**, public and private preschools and **kindergartens**, **Head Start**, **Early Head Start**, **early intervention**). They may also be employed in a variety of roles in which they provide direct or indirect services to children and families (e.g., lead teacher, consultant, home visitor, program administrator, staff development specialist). Although the majority of entry-level professionals are in lead teacher roles, certification standards must take into account these possible roles and employment settings.

Third, several researchers have concluded that the quality of early childhood staff is, if not the most important, one of the most important factors in determining program quality and outcomes for children (e.g., Buysse et al., 1999; Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995). In addition, a statistically significant correlation between specialized education and the quality of learning environments has been reported. On the basis of a review of research investigating the relationship between formal education and professional experience to quality, Kontos and Wilcox-Herzog (2001) concluded that (a) formal education positively correlates with classroom quality, (b) specialized education is positively correlated with teacher behavior, and (c) experience is not consistently correlated to program quality or effective teacher behavior.

Finally, federal legislation, if not mandating certification, suggests that early childhood educators obtain specialized education in the field and move toward full certification. Head Start required that at least 50 percent of its teachers have an associate's degree by Fall 2003. Part C of the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** requires that early interventionists possess the highest entry-level degree for state certification as a minimum standard for providing services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The **No Child Left Behind Act** (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) requires every state to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified, with *highly qualified* defined as having obtained

full certification in the field in which the individual is teaching or having passed a state teacher licensing examination.

It has been consistently recommended that ECE and ECSE certification focus on ages birth through eight and that within that age range individuals specialize in two of the three age spans—infant/toddler, preschool, or primary. This would result in a broad knowledge base regarding development and learning and the implications for assessment and curriculum across the age range from birth through eight. Specialization in two of the three subperiods would allow for in-depth knowledge and skills based on career choices and workplace needs.

Consistent recommendations have also been made regarding the content of ECE and ECSE certification. Most states base certification on the standards of the professional associations representing the various disciplines within teacher education (CEC, 2003). Through the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCATE) State Partnership Program, forty-eight states have developed partnerships with NCATE through which joint accreditation reviews of teacher education programs within institutions of higher education (IHEs) are conducted according to state and national standards. Within those states, teacher education programs are reviewed using both state and national standards even though an individual IHE may not seek NCATE accreditation. Thus, an ECE program would be based on state and NAEYC standards, whereas an ECSE program would address state and DEC/CEC and CEC Common Core standards. Blended ECE and ECSE programs would include state standards and all three sets of professional association standards.

Standards identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions (i.e., values, attitudes, beliefs) that early childhood and early childhood special educators must possess in order to work effectively with young children and their families. Thus, standards define what early childhood professionals must know and be able to do. The standards across the professional associations identified above emphasize that all early childhood educators must demonstrate a common core of knowledge and skills for working with all young children and their families. These standards are typically organized by the following categories: child development and learning; family and community relationships; observation and assessment; curriculum, teaching, and learning; and professionalism. Field experiences are emphasized and integrated throughout the standards. The CEC Common Core standards are organized similarly, but in more discrete categories: foundations, characteristics of learners, individual differences, instructional strategies, learning environments and social interactions, language, instructional planning, assessment, ethics and professional practice, and collaboration.

Age and content congruency is advocated to promote reciprocal agreements across states, provinces, and territories. Certification configurations tend to be separate ECE and ECSE, in which individuals specialize in one of the two disciplines, dual ECE and ECSE in which individuals complete separate preparation programs but qualify for both certifications, or blended ECE/ECSE in which individuals complete a common program of study resulting in depth and focus in both ECE and ECSE. Blended certification should include state standards, as well as all NAEYC, DEC/CEC, and CEC Common Core standards. Because of the trend

toward inclusive settings for young children, states, provinces, and territories that choose to maintain separate ECE and ECSE certificates are encouraged to develop linkages between those certifications to support the option for IHEs to develop blended preparation programs.

Professional literature identifies several trends and issues related to ECE and ECSE certification. Because certification is the responsibility of states, provinces, and territories, there is great variation across those jurisdictions resulting in issues regarding reciprocity. In a review of early childhood certification in the United States, Ratcliff et al. (1999) reported that few states adhere to recommendations for a birth through age eight certification. They found that states' definitions of the early childhood age span and its subdivisions vary greatly, with at least twelve different licensure configurations identified. For thirty of thirty-eight states reporting, Dannaer and Kraus (2002), identified six different age configurations between birth and age eight (e.g., birth through eight years, birth through five years, three through eight years) for ECSE certification and seven for blended ECE/ECSE certification.

Although research links the quality of programs and outcomes for children with increased qualifications for early childhood educators, many early childhood programs do not require staff to have college degrees, certification, or demonstrate competence in the recommended standards. Yet, in the United States, all fifty states and territories provide services to children ages birth through five with disabilities under the requirements of the IDEA. Most have used existing certifications to meet the "minimum highest entry" requirement for personnel under IDEA, with many of those certifications not including the infant/toddler age range. In their annual review of preschool programs for children with disabilities, Dannaer and Kraus (2002) reported that only thirty of the thirty-eight states providing data have an ECSE certification or a blended ECE/ECSE certification. This report does not indicate if certification is required in those states to work with preschool children with disabilities.

A variety of programs exist for children who are developing typically (e.g., child care, private and public preschool programs, Head Start, Early Head Start), with many of these programs being inclusive. In the United States, forty-six states and the District of Columbia fund some type of preschool program for children younger than age five (AFT, 2002). Some fund only one type of program, while others fund multiple types of programs (e.g., public preschool for all three- and four-year-olds, preschool for children identified at-risk). The AFT's review of policies regarding state-funded early childhood programs indicated that only thirty-two states and DC require a bachelor's degree for lead early childhood teachers, while all states require a bachelor's degree for kindergarten teachers. That same report indicated that fifteen states and D.C. require a bachelor's degree and certification for all state-funded early childhood settings, with another ten states requiring a bachelor's degree and certification only in selected settings. When considering early childhood programs in addition to state-funded programs, forty states require no college education for licensed child care staff and less than one-half of teachers working with three- and four-year-olds have a college degree (NIEER, 2003).

To address the above inconsistencies in certification, as well as the requirement for certification, numerous groups have recommended that early childhood educators in lead teacher roles have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and certification (e.g., ACEI, AFT, ASCD, ATE, DEC/CEC, NAEYC, NASBE). The following recommendations may assist states, provinces, and territories in developing certification requirements, ensuring that all lead teachers are fully qualified, and supporting higher education in developing and offering early childhood teacher education programs:

1. Include the birth through eight age range and standards developed by professional associations in certification requirements.
2. Develop career ladder or lattice systems that allow for upward mobility and increased compensation as early childhood educators increase their preparation, and support movement across programs/systems for horizontal movement of personnel.
3. Enhance collaboration between IHEs and governmental agencies involved with certification.
4. Support IHEs in developing or expanding programs to meet certification requirements. This should include incentives to develop new courses and programs; employ adequate numbers of qualified faculty, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and develop articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions.
5. Provide resources to improve working conditions, salaries, and benefits of early childhood educators as a means to attract qualified personnel.
6. Provide incentives for newly employed personnel and currently employed personnel to obtain certification. This may include provisional certifications; financial assistance for tuition, books, child care, etc.; and "grandfathering" clauses.

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Vickie D. Stayton

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH)

The TEACH (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood[®] Project is a professional development support system for teachers and directors working in early care and education programs or family child care homes with children ages birth through five years. The project is based on a scholarship program that links increased education of teachers and directors with increased compensation, a commitment to their employer, and reduced turnover.

The TEACH Early Childhood Project began in 1990 as a pilot developed by and operated through Child Care Services Association (CCSA), Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The TEACH Project was developed as a reaction to a North Carolina child care workforce study that reported, on average, child care teachers made little more than minimum wage, few had earned degrees beyond high school diplomas, and child care programs did not offer teachers any support for continuing education. The report also noted that the statewide annual turnover rate for teachers working in early care and education was 40 percent. The initial pilot was successful in providing twenty-one scholarships to teachers working in child care centers. Initial funds were provided through a variety of community and family foundations (Child Care Services Association, 2000). In 2004, the TEACH Project was institutionalized in the State of North Carolina and is now available in every county. The North Carolina Project operates on an annual budget of \$3.4 million that is funded through federal, state, and private funds.

Since its inception in North Carolina, the project has been adopted by twenty-two other states. It is supported by a variety of state government and community agencies in those states. Currently, twenty-two states have a licensed TEACH scholarship program and they are supported through the TEACH Early Childhood Project Technical Assistance and Quality Assurance Center located in Chapel Hill, North Carolina (TEACH Early Childhood Project Technical Assistance and Quality Assurance Center, 2003).

The Project is evidence of public and private partnerships that are initiated by local early care and education advocates. The Project is flexible enough to be adopted by the individual states yet fixed in key areas to maintain the integrity of the program. The adaptation of the Project in other states came after local advocates developed an awareness of the growing problems of poor quality child care in that area. Opportunities to expand this professional development support system have come as a result of the availability of federal funds in the area of **Child Care and Development Funds** and increases in the **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families'** funding (Kerlin, 2003).

All TEACH Early Childhood Projects include four components; however, the details of each component may vary among different licensed programs. First, the scholarship is usually a partial one for tuition, books, and a travel stipend for a teacher to attend a credentialing program in early childhood education

(state credential, child development associate credential, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree). Many scholarships also include funds for paid release time so the teacher can attend classes during the day, study, or take care of personal business. The cost for tuition and books that is not covered by the scholarship is usually provided by the scholar and their employer. The second component is the requirement of a specified amount of educational coursework that is outlined in the TEACH contract and must be completed in a specified timeframe. Following completion of the required education, the teacher is granted a compensation incentive in the form of a raise or bonus. Some compensation incentives are paid wholly by the TEACH Project, others are paid wholly by the employers, and others represent a mixture of funding between the employer and the TEACH Project. Finally, the teacher makes a commitment to remain in the early care and education field, and most commonly, with their sponsoring child care program, for a specified period of time.

The impact that the TEACH Early Childhood Project has had on the early care and education field varies based on the length of time that a Project has been operating and the amount of funds available to teachers through the Project. In North Carolina, approximately 5,000 teachers participate in the TEACH Project each year, their earnings increase by an average of 10 percent, and the turnover rate for teachers averages less than 10 percent annually. Statewide turnover rates for all early childhood care and education teachers have dropped to 24 percent a year. Similar results have been reported by every state operating a TEACH Project. In addition to the impact on individual teachers, the Project has been a catalyst for system changes that require public policy and law makers to consider professional development of teachers to include not only scholarship money to take college courses, but a complete system that recognizes the difficulty that teachers have in going to school, working full-time, and supporting their own family. Another system that has been impacted is the higher education system as more teachers take college-level courses and demand alternative delivery models, flexible days and times that courses are offered, more variety of courses, and course content that addresses the needs of experienced adult learners. For more information, contact Child Care Services Association at www.childcareservices.org.

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Susan Catapano

Teacher Education, Early Childhood

Among the pressing educational issues facing our nation is an alarming shortage of qualified classroom teachers. Since the publication of the Report of the

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996), debates on educational reform have focused on the preparation and continuing education of teachers and the impact of well-qualified teachers on students' learning. Teacher quality is a major priority of the reform agenda because what teachers know and learn how to do as a result of their own professional preparation significantly influences children's success in school. Teacher education has thus assumed an unprecedented importance at the level of national policy and within the field of educational research and practice.

Teacher education in the United States refers to postsecondary coursework and classroom experiences that help develop and deepen both the content and the pedagogical skills necessary to ensure that all children learn. Within the field of early childhood as well as other divisions in the broad field of education, teacher education occurs at both the *initial* and *advanced* levels. *Initial* early childhood teacher education consists of general education as well as domain-specific content preparation and specific methodological preparation. Guidelines for such programs of study, often described as preservice teacher education, are generally linked to state licensing requirements and result in an initial teaching license, thereby making one eligible to teach. *Advanced* early childhood teacher education consists of professional development that increases the skill and knowledge of licensed practicing teachers. Although requirements vary from state to state, advanced teacher education programs often lead to a permanent or professional state license. Whether the program of study is for initial or advanced licensure, the primary aim of teacher education programs is the improvement of student learning and achievement through the improvement of teachers' skill and knowledge. Effective teacher education programs entail rigorous and relevant preparation for the contemporary realities of teaching. These realities include teaching children from diverse backgrounds, addressing children's individual abilities, working in partnership with children's families, having a deep knowledge of the content they teach, and being able to articulate what and why they teach as they do. These new demands have exacerbated decades-old controversies about the nature of and need for early childhood teacher education.

The criticism of teacher education was originally focused on the education of elementary and secondary teachers. Since the 1990s, however, early childhood teacher education has become an essential part of the school reform agenda as the public addresses the educational needs of the very young. The next section highlights the unique traditions in early childhood teacher education that are related to preparation of early childhood teachers.

Historical and Philosophical Traditions of Early Childhood Teacher Education

While issues of teacher quality and higher standards are dominating the educational debates, controversies regarding the content and means of early childhood teacher education are not new. Rather, they began in the nineteenth century and continue today as the cornerstone of our field just as they did when the Committee of Nineteen of the International Kindergarten Union was forced to issue three reports because it could not come to consensus on the **kindergarten**

curriculum in the early 1900s. For most of the twentieth century, early childhood teacher education programs prepared young females in programs that emphasized knowledge in child development as its core knowledge base. Child development knowledge and the knowledge of developmental norms became the cornerstone of most early childhood teacher education programs. Yet, within the field of early childhood teacher education itself, there has been a continuing distinction in teacher education programs for child care staff, preschool and kindergarten teachers, and primary teachers, all of whom are being educated as early childhood professionals. The history of early childhood teacher education is long and rich and provides a historical and philosophical perspective from which to consider contemporary issues in the preparation of qualified teachers for young children.

High-Quality Teacher Education for Initial Preparation

The publication *What Matters Most: Teaching and America's Future* (National Commission of Teaching and America Future, 1996) marked a decade of national reports that addressed issues of quality in American education. Its leading recommendation called for higher standards for teachers linked to standards for students, and for teacher education at all levels to be standards-based to obtain a cadre of highly qualified teachers.

Consistent with this recommendation and beginning in the early 1990s, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) began raising standards for entry into the profession through rigorous new standards for accreditation, licensing, and advanced certification. Teacher education as a field raised the standards for accrediting its programs. The NCATE devised a new performance-based accreditation system that many regard as helping to raise the level of teacher preparation. Institutions of higher education that choose to seek NCATE approval must now provide evidence that their candidates can perform well in the classroom and on licensing examinations. In states with NCATE-approved programs, there is an increasing alignment between teacher education accreditation standards, beginning teacher licensing standards, and advanced certification standards, thus providing a more coherent system of teacher preparation and development. NCATE-approved programs also are seen as providing the public with evidence that the institution is capable of delivering well-qualified teachers for all children.

Other sources of influence on teacher education come from the field of early childhood education. In response to the call for standards-based education reform, the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** has revised its standards for the colleges and universities that prepare early childhood teachers. These *Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation* provide research-based program guidelines to institutions of higher education that prepare initial teacher candidates and advanced practicing professionals. The revised standards focus more deeply on academic content, cultural and linguistic diversity, children with special needs, practical experiences and preparation, and outcomes of teacher education (i.e., their impact on young children's learning). Many U.S. early childhood professionals consider the use of NAEYC standards as a

crucial step in raising the quality of programs for all young children by improving the preparation of early childhood teachers.

Guidelines from these (NAEYC, NCATE) and other (e.g., the **Association for Childhood Education International** [ACEI]) professional organizations that develop standards for the preparation of early childhood teachers converge with a growing body of research on teacher characteristics and preschool quality. Combined, these sources suggest that good early childhood teachers should have a minimum knowledge of (1) child development, (2) an understanding of developmentally appropriate practice and assessment, (3) knowledge and understanding of the foundations of literacy and numeracy, (4) knowledge and skill in appropriate methodology that fosters skill and concept acquisition, and (5) understanding of the children and families with whom they work. This core knowledge should inform all early childhood teacher education programs regardless of the credential being sought (i.e., Child Development Credential [CDA], associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree) or the focus of the teacher education program (i.e., programs for children from birth through age five, programs for children ages five through eight).

Despite the existence of these forms of professional recognition, not all early childhood teachers are prepared in programs that are explicitly influenced by such standards. Some programs may be situated in institutions that do not belong to NCATE or have not adopted the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) principles. Others may be in specialized institutions or may primarily aim to prepare teachers for careers other than that of public school teacher. Thus, the diversity of teacher professional preparation and professional roles is a major factor on the career continuum.

If these recommended guidelines are not sufficient to inspire reform in university teacher education programs, there is an additional incentive. The federal government's first dramatic entry into teacher quality, Title II of the Higher Education Act, increased accountability requirements for colleges of education. Colleges must now report institutional pass rates on the teacher preparation examination used in their state. This data is publicly available and is used as a requirement in professional accreditation decisions.

Literature on Teacher Education and Teacher Learning

Research has long supported the view that the teacher is the single most important variable in student learning (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). The literature also clearly points out that many teachers are being asked to work in ways for which they have not been prepared—"to engage in the systematic, continuous improvement in the quality of the educational experience of students and to subject themselves to the discipline of measuring their success by the metric of students' academic performance" (Elmore, 2002, p. 3). Some research concludes that high quality teacher preparation has a positive influence on student achievement at both the individual and classroom levels. Conversely, teachers who do not hold a teaching certificate or who are teaching in a field for which they were not prepared, have students who do less well than students taught by teachers

prepared in high-quality teacher preparation programs (Goldhaber and Brewer, 2000; Educational Testing Service, 2000).

Other research (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005; Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005) synthesizes teacher education research concerning the effectiveness of formal teacher preparation. Findings show that well-prepared teachers demonstrate a common set of agreed upon essential knowledge and skills, are more likely to stay in the profession, and produce more student learning. The studies also report that program components related to a clear, articulated vision of teaching and learning are related to the quality of teachers as well as student achievement.

Still other literature (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005; Wilson et al., 2001, 2003) synthesizes research on key issues in teacher education. The results for issues related to pedagogical preparation, and clinical experiences show a positive relationship between teacher preparation and student achievement whereas results on arts and science preparation of teachers indicate that knowledge may affect teachers' performance through stronger verbal, writing, and critical thinking skills.

Finally, there is a body of teacher education research that addresses the preparation of teachers with a critical, multicultural perspective to meet the changing cultural and linguistic demographics of today's school population (Banks, 2005; Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005; Sleeter, 2001; Seidl and Friend, 2002; Zeichner, 1996). Much of this work shows short term impact and lacks longitudinal, empirical evidence that tracks changes in teacher candidates' attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions as they work in classrooms with underserved populations of children. The existing studies find that those preparing to teach often have a monolithic perspective and believe that children from other culture are the problem (Florio-Ruane, 2001, Zeichner, 1993). Sleeter's research (2001) notes the widening cultural gap between today's diverse population of children and those that teach them, because most teacher candidates are white, female, and middle-class and bring a superficial understanding of cultural issues into their teaching.

To reduce this gap and address the changing cultural makeup of today's schools teacher preparation programs began making programmatic changes. Many introduced multicultural education courses or targeted at least one clinical placement in a school with diverse population. Florio-Ruane (2001) suggests the need to go beyond courses and placement and to address students beliefs about diversity early in their teacher preparation programs by embedding multiple voices and personal stories that help teacher candidates view culture as something all people hold. By developing critical reflective educators who value multiple perspectives, teacher candidates can begin their journey to becoming multiculturally competent teachers.

In sum, the research literature on teacher education shows that the most powerful learning opportunities for teachers are anchored in student learning, include high standards, are content-focused, develop ongoing collaboration and networks across teachers, share common norms of beliefs, and provide in-depth, focused learning experiences that relate closely to the classroom (Elmore, 2002). While the research base provides ways to design and deliver high-quality teacher

preparation, it is limited in identifying a large body of empirical evidence on its effects on teachers' practice or its impact on student learning.

Career Continuum

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) recommended that "school districts, states, unions, and professional associations cooperate to make teaching a true profession, with a career continuum that places teaching at the top and rewards teachers for their knowledge and skill" (p. 94). In support of these aims, voluntary standards have been set by a number of professional groups (e.g., National Association for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to ensure teacher quality across levels and settings. Conceptually, these standards are closely aligned, providing a consistent framework for the continuum of teachers' professional development. This continuum of standards is focused on a set of shared knowledge, skills, and commitments to ensure that accreditation, licensing, and advanced certification standards are compatible and together form a coherent system of quality assurance for the profession.

Contemporary Influences on ECE Teacher Education

Three major events in the last decade highlight the growing importance attributed to well-qualified early childhood teachers and are associated with specific and sometimes controversial changes in teacher education programs. These include a federal literacy initiative, the release of a national report on prevention of reading difficulties, and increased attention to early brain development. In particular, a new emphasis on student performance is profoundly influencing the ways teachers are selected, prepared, licensed, and evaluated. Teacher effectiveness is increasingly measured by what students learn, and teacher quality is measured by both content and pedagogical knowledge. Such conditions necessitate that teacher education programs examine their models of teacher education to ensure that they are meeting the changed emphases on accountability, assessment, and standards and teaching appropriate content to young children.

National initiatives are not only increasing quality demands on teacher education programs; they are also increasing demands for the quantity of such programs. For example, the federal **No Child Left Behind Act** (2001) requires that states have a highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom by 2006. The government definition of "a highly qualified teacher" is one that is licensed or certified by the state, holds at least a bachelor's degree, and has passed a rigorous State test on subject knowledge and teaching skills. Achieving this goal will require a greater conformity to previously described reform initiatives in early childhood teacher education; it will also require greater attention to the recruitment of college students into the field of teacher education; and increased collaboration between universities and public school professional development programs.

Summary and Conclusions

The increased demand for more well-qualified teachers who are knowledgeable about what they teach, skilled in how to teach children of different backgrounds and abilities, and deeply committed to whom they are teaching translates into a need for more high-quality programs of teacher preparation and development. The challenge for teacher education programs in the twenty-first century will be to maintain a dual focus on the heightened expectations on teachers and schools in light of changing understandings about adult and child learning and effective teaching. This dual focus naturally evokes tensions that have ramifications for early childhood teacher education programs and for teacher educators. Some of these tensions are conceptual in nature (e.g., inquiry-oriented practice versus technical practice, philosophy and reality conflicts, content versus pedagogy) and are voiced differently from policy makers, parents, and administrators. Others are based in the teacher education research and practice literature (e.g., traditional versus alternative certification and the increased coursework in leadership and advocacy and personal belief systems that drive program development and change) and others are political (responding to federal, state, and local mandates). Teacher education, in general, and early childhood teacher education, in particular, continues to be plagued by competing loyalties in an effort to prepare the best teachers for all of the children in the United States. *See also* Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credentialing Programs.

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Joan Isenberg

Teacher Research

Teacher research is generally defined as the “systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers” (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993, p. 7) and is described by a wide range of labels, including practitioner research, teachers-as-researchers, **action research**, partnership research, and teacher inquiry. Teacher researchers study and analyze a wide range of questions and aspects related to their classroom practice, typically resulting in new plans of action and new knowledge about the teaching learning process. Current school reform efforts and recommendations to raise professional standards for teacher certification in the United States include the provision of teaching experiences that move teachers beyond a dependence on organized knowledge (generated from outside schools and classrooms) and the transmission of this knowledge, toward new understandings developed through critical thinking and teacher research. While this “call to action” might seem relatively recent, teacher research in the United States is not.

Historically, evidence of teacher research has spanned more than a century of work among teachers and teacher educators who have inquired alone and in collaboration, utilized diverse, yet related, methodologies, and engaged in a range of traditions in which teacher research and practice are mutually informing, nested endeavors. The many forms of teacher research have included and continue to include both empirical and conceptual studies and utilize an array of data sources such as reflective journals, oral inquiry, case studies, classroom-based research, and autobiographical accounts of teaching, learning, and schooling. Regardless of the label used or form taken, teacher research positions teachers as producers as well as consumers of knowledge—knowledge that is situated and constructed in classrooms and schools, focused on pedagogical, social, and political issues, and informed by the learning lives of children and teachers. Noted educator Eleanor Duckworth (1987) wrote the following about her vision of researchers who also teach:

This kind of researcher [cares] about some part of the world and how it works enough to want to make it accessible to others; he or she would be fascinated by the questions of how to engage people in it and how people make sense of it; would have time and resources to pursue these questions to the depth of his or her interests, to write what he or she learned, and to contribute to the theoretical and pedagogical discussions on the nature and development of human learning. (p. 140)

Within the wide array of qualitative or interpretive studies, teacher researchers’ aims include understanding the complexity of the teaching and learning process, addressing the need to study contexts of learning that are particular and situated, and including diverse sources of data for creating thick descriptions of

learning. In these studies, methodologies typically include in-depth interviews, observational field notes, and a diversity of classroom documentation (work samples, photographs, video tapes, transcriptions). At times, similar to the above-mentioned product-process studies, teacher researchers have participated in interpretive studies alongside university researchers. Yet, even when teachers are members of such research initiatives, the struggle continues today to situate teacher researchers in positions of equal or shared authority for contributing to the knowledge base that informs practices, policies, and programs in schools.

During the past century in the United States, there appears to be at least three periods when teacher research has gained a prominent foothold in the professional literature, taking center stage in the dominant discourse, and legitimizing the researching lives of early childhood teachers. These include the Progressive Era early in the twentieth century, the action research and collaborative action research movement spearheaded by Kurt Lewin midcentury, and practitioner research during the 1970s and 1980s to the present.

The roots of teacher research in the United States go back to the Progressive Education Era, led by John Dewey, when he called for teachers to engage in “reflective action” that would lead toward inquiry-oriented practice (1933). Progressive educators’ research and practice focused more on the child rather than curriculum content as the source of direction for the creation of relevant teaching and learning experiences. Teacher reports were the cornerstone of the model of inquiry in Dewey’s laboratory school, informed by documentation including teachers’ field notes, classroom experiments, and teachers’ collective debriefings of the daily learning experiences of children and teachers. Attention was on the study of how to provide for, promote, and investigate the active engagement of children in authentic classroom experiences and to share knowledge learned from these classroom studies with others in the field of early childhood education.

The early efforts by teacher researchers of the Progressive Era to critically study children’s learning lives in naturalistic, school settings were expanded upon and to some degree elevated by the work of Kurt Lewin in the 1940s and 1950s, who coined the phrase “action research.” Action research is one form of teacher research in which teachers study classroom problems or questions and act to change practice in response to the analyses of their data. Subsequently, action researchers have investigated a wide range of topics, including pedagogical (e.g., impact of teaching strategies on children’s learning, content-specific studies such as teaching writing), organizational (e.g., the role of open classrooms on children’s learning), and community-focused (e.g., home-school relations, parent participation) aspects of teaching and learning. The practice of action researchers is characterized by movements through iterative cycles of critical observation and documentation, reflection, planning, acting, revising, and acting. Engagement in such cycles of inquiry typically results in a heightened awareness of decision making, problem posing, and problem solving. Teacher researchers are sometimes referred to as reflective practitioners because they reflect *on* action and *in* action to frame, critique, and respond to problems or questions (Schon, 1987).

Consequently, teaching is praxis because teachers examine theory in light of practice, through recursive cycles of reflection and action.

While teachers can engage in action research alone, often teachers conduct research with others through research collaboratives, study groups, or critical friend partnerships. It was Lewin who first sought to bring researchers and teachers together to engage in collaborative action research, where the mechanism and potentials of the social construction of knowledge are made visible and diverse and complementary perspectives contribute to new, shared understandings. From these earliest years to today, university researchers and teachers form action research groups in which teachers learn to conduct research, contribute new insights and knowledge to the field, and view teaching and researching as mutually informing inquiry. In addition to collaborative action research other research partnerships have developed over the years including those created by Professional Development Schools (PDS) and developed by the Holmes Partnership, Research is a fundamental cornerstone of these university-public school partnerships in which classroom teachers, preservice teachers, and university faculty research together, shaping the policies and programs of local schools while educating young novice teachers toward inquiry-oriented practice.

Teacher researchers have not always partnered with university researchers, but have also formed research collaborations within and across classrooms and schools, utilizing a form of systematic and intentional inquiry not necessarily representative of action research. For example, during the 1980s and 1990s a number of research collaboratives developed, including the research communities such as Patricia Carini and colleagues at the Prospect School in Bennington, Vermont, and Steve Seidel and others at Harvard Project Zero in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In these collaborations, teachers generated and used protocols to guide their analyses and interpretations of a wide range of classroom records, including photographs, transcriptions of children's conversations, videotapes, work samples, and teachers' field notes. For example, at the Prospect School, teachers created the *Descriptive Review of the Child* process to frame and systematize their careful investigations of children's early learning experiences, inviting teachers from throughout the school to participate in the collective analyses and interpretations of rich and diverse classroom records. Educators at Project Zero created an inquiry process called the *Collaborative Assessment Conference*. Teachers come together to talk about children's learning and use this tool or framework to systematically guide their conversations related to how children work on problems or explore interests and the role of teachers in their efforts to improve contexts for learning.

Research collaborations similar to these developed concurrently, focused on particular curriculum content areas, with early literacy and children's oral and written language taking the early lead in the 1970s and 1980s, including play, storying, and drama, followed by, most notably, mathematics and science instruction. Such research groups have grown during the past two decades due, in part, to the support and encouragement by professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Writing Project, the Critical Friends' Groups (CFGs) of the National School Reform Faculty's (NSRF)

group, the International Reading Association, to name a few, and the Teachers Network Leadership Institute (TNLI). These national and international initiatives aimed at facilitating teachers' research together, have been joined by a plethora of local and statewide groups aimed at creating contexts for studying teacher practice, children's learning, and the impact of policies and practices on schooling in specific locales.

Beginning in the mid to late 1980s, similar work by educators in the more than thirty municipal infant-toddler and preprimary schools of **Reggio Emilia**, Italy began to influence the work of U.S. teacher-researchers' generation and use of classroom **documentation**. Documentation is not only a compilation of classroom records but also a spiraling process in which teachers collaboratively use documents to inform and guide teacher practice; reveal children's construction of knowledge; demonstrate a respect for children's work; validate the competencies of children, and communicate teachers' ideas for and understanding of children's learning lives to each other, to parents, and to the larger community. Through this approach to early education, Reggio-inspired teachers and teacher educators in the U.S. have developed research collaboratives (e.g., **Reggio-Inspired Teacher Education** (RITE) and the Informed Practice Collaboratives) and meet regularly to share and engage in collective reflections from which collaborative decisions are made for how to challenge, deepen, and extend children's learning. Among the functions of documentation for teacher inquiry are (a) representational (creating meaning), (b) mediational (linking thought to action), and (c) epistemological (providing a source of new knowledge). Across these examples of research collaboratives, early childhood teachers engage in research with others to chronicle, "make visible," and disseminate new understandings about children's learning even as they create contexts and constructs for research that are inclusive, deliberate, and embedded within the practice of daily teaching.

Concurrent with the emergence of research collaboratives in the United States, a rich reservoir of teacher research (both conceptually and empirically based) by individual teachers has developed. Nevertheless, evidence of empirical studies by individual teachers is more difficult to find in the literature than conceptually based research. Yet, the creation of new professional journals aimed at publishing the writings and the research of teachers (e.g., *Voices of Practitioners: Teacher Research in Early Childhood Education*, now a special section of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children's** (NAEYC) journal *Young Children*, the online journal of *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, and the journal *Theory into Practice*) during recent decades have become more plentiful. Teachers' conceptual studies have been most evident through the narratives and autobiographical accounts that describe the complex and multifaceted nature of teaching and learning.

These chronicles of teachers' and children's educative experiences may be considered by some researchers and educators as more teacher stories rather than serious research. However, if one applies Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) definition of teacher research (noted at the beginning of this entry) then the writings of well-known teacher researchers such as Vivian Paley, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, and Francis Hawkins clearly represent deliberate and systematic inquiry,

often conducted over long periods of time, and informed by the analyses of a diversity of documentation. These accounts of teacher inquiry are squarely aimed at answering important questions focused on understanding the emergence of early literacy, investigating children's friendships, rights, and moral dimensions in the classroom, and facing the challenge of how to reach troubled and impoverished children, for example. Such questions and teachers' written accounts of their studies are focused on real problems that subsequently frame teacher research, inform teacher practice, and contribute new knowledge to the field of early childhood education.

As evidenced in the teacher research described here, teachers over the past millennium in the United States have continued to take steps away from a position of "the researched" toward one of "researcher," who contribute new knowledge to the field of early education. The work of teacher researchers includes both how teachers construct new knowledge and which knowledge they choose to pursue. Here, teacher knowledge refers to a range of foci from personal, practical knowledge to pedagogical content or subject matter knowledge to propositional knowledge. Thus, knowledge includes two distinct and related moments in learning, researching, and teaching. These include both the process of constructing new knowledge and the realization that certain knowledge already exists (Shor and Freire, 1987). The disposition to continually inquire, to seek, and to connect ways of knowing is one that views the teacher as a lifelong learner or student of teaching, committed to generating practical theories and "local knowledge" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993, p. 45) with others and sharing that knowledge with the broader field of education.

Regardless of the focus or form of research or type of knowledge produced and used, teacher researchers are influencing reform in the field of early childhood **teacher education** as well as within classrooms and across schools. This is occurring even as the debate continues on whether knowledge generated by authorities outside teachers' classrooms holds more weight (as scientific knowledge) than knowledge generated by classroom researchers. Nevertheless, the evidence of teachers' movement away from roles characterized by passivity from which they receive knowledge from "outsiders" without question, deliberation, or challenge has shifted toward one characterized by systematic and intentional research, resulting in inquiry from which new knowledge and ways of knowing emerge. Thus, teacher researchers today are actualizing what John Dewey (1929) noted early in the twentieth century of the teacher research movement—that the most important act of a teacher is to investigate pedagogical problems through inquiry.

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Mary Jane Moran

Teaching Exceptional Children (TEC)

Teaching Exceptional Children (TEC) is a journal published by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) for teachers and administrators of children with disabilities and children who are gifted. A peer-reviewed journal, it primarily publishes articles about practical methods and materials that can be used in classrooms, as well as articles on current issues in special education learning and teaching. The journal also provides information on the latest technologies, techniques, and procedures developed for teaching exceptional students. *TEC* has a practical focus aimed at helping teachers of exception children to put new practices and technologies into immediate application. Articles applicable to infants, young children, and families frequently appear in this journal, although *TEC* is not specifically an early childhood journal. The journal has been in continuous publication since November 1968 and now publishes six issues a year. All members of the CEC receive the journal as part of their membership, but nonmembers can also subscribe. The full-text of the journal is also available online. For more information, see the CEC Web site at www.cec.sped.org.

Samuel Odom

TEC. See *Teaching Exceptional Children*

Technology and Early Childhood Education

Broadly defined, technology in early childhood education includes a variety of media: computer-mediated software programs, video/audio learning instruments, robotic building kits, and electronic toys. Technology can be used as stand-alone classroom-based learning material in the form of a **technology curriculum** or can be integrated into other classroom curricula. Technology can also be used at home to supplement and augment children's experiences in the classroom.

Advances in technology provide new potentials in classroom learning, and make possible new ways for peer social interaction to take place inside and outside the classroom. As such, the body of research in technology and early childhood education has multiple foci, including the impact of technology on early **cognitive development**, personal-social development, language and **literacy**, numbers and **mathematics**.

Educational technologies that are used in early childhood classrooms to enhance classroom learning can be categorized into the following four groups, depending on the pedagogical goal of the tool and the design features of the software:

- computer-assisted instruction (CAI),
- intelligent tutoring systems (ITS),

- constructionist learning materials,
- and computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL).

While technologies developed within these four paradigms all have the goal of enhancing children's cognitive development, they differ in their theoretical stance of how that goal is reached. Computer-assisted instructional instruments (such as computer software that teaches numbers and vocabularies) take a drill and practice approach, whereas intelligent tutoring systems, which could be either computer software or electronic hardware in form, iteratively adapt their inherent, computerized educational curriculum to match the ability of the student users. Both computer-assisted instructional instruments and intelligent tutoring systems are usually stand-alone learning materials that may or may not require close supervision from teachers or adults.

Constructionist learning materials are technological tools that allow children to become designers and creators of their own personally meaningful computer-based projects. These tools are often open-ended and serve children to start developing technological fluency as well as to reflect about their own thinking and learning. Finally, computer-supported collaborative learning instruments provide means for communication and collaboration among students and between students, parents, and teachers. Technological tools developed within both the constructionist and the computer supported collaborative learning paradigms are usually open-ended educational tools meant to be integrated into the classroom curriculum, and therefore the content areas to explore with those tools is flexible and can be determined by the teacher. In contrast, software developed within the CAI and ITS paradigms involves content already produced by the designer of the computational tool.

A large body of interdisciplinary research on technology and early childhood education has been conducted in the past three decades. Early research efforts focused on the impact of technology on children's cognitive and **academic** development. In early childhood, for example, research has shown the benefits of CAI type drill and practice software in assisting children to complete counting and sorting tasks. Beyond simple drill and practice, technologies, especially computer simulations, have also shown potentials for supporting children's *mental actions*, or mental object-manipulation tasks, such as rotating objects or identifying patterns. Through simulations, both on the computer and through electronic hardware and toys, technology affords the ability to concretize abstract cognitive tasks that were previously thought to be unreachable for young children.

Constructionist types of technological environments, such as Logo, or the language of the turtle, were developed by Seymour Papert and his colleagues in the 1960s. These materials are now widely used in early childhood classrooms. Research has shown the benefits of these experiences, for example, when young children learn how to program a computer while exploring powerful ideas about mathematics. New types of robotic technologies allow children to manipulate technology in the same way they play and learn with pattern blocks or other manipulative toys frequently used in the early childhood setting.

Using technology in early childhood classrooms can also help foster peer collaboration among students and promote positive social development. Research has shown that working with technology, especially computer-related educational tools, instigates new forms of collaboration among students, such as helping and instructing behaviors, discussion, and cooperation. Technology can also be a medium through which interaction between children with special needs and their peers can be facilitated. Several types of technology are specifically designed to promote social interaction among student users. Computer supported collaborative learning tools are purposefully set up to promote communication and peer learning among young children by encouraging group work and sharing. With proper instructions from teachers, children can use CSCL tools to learn to collaborate, to problem-solve, and to work on tasks that may be otherwise too difficult to do alone.

However, different types of technology foster different levels of social and personal development. The literature has raised concerns for technologies that do not promote positive interactions between children and computers and among children using technology in the classroom. Some uses of technology, while effective in promoting cognitive development, may not be ideal for social and pro-social development. For example, although technologies that promote drill and practice may foster self-efficacy and promote turn-taking and sharing, they may also engender competitiveness in children. Moreover, using technology as a stand-alone tutor without proper and planned integration with classroom curriculum may result in isolation among students and hinder peer collaboration and learning. The integration between technology and classroom curriculum and management is vital to the successful use of technology in early childhood education classrooms

Technologies that effectively facilitate social interaction also promote language and literacy development. Activities around technologies that support interactions among student peers by encouraging peer learning, peer teaching, and cooperation inevitably become venues for language-rich exchanges. At the computer, for example, research has shown that children speak twice as many words per minute than at other non-technology-related play activities such as playdough and building blocks. The abstract and open-ended nature of many educational technologies, such as computer simulation software or electronic and robotic construction kits, has been shown to effectively engender imagination, creativity, and language exchanges that are rich with emotion and interpersonal understanding. However, as with any other benefits of using technology in early childhood education, effective use of educational technologies as a tool to promote literacy and language development depends greatly on the curriculum used along with the technology. While even stand-alone drill and practice computer software can help children read and strengthen their vocabulary recall, the impact of technology is greatest with regard to language development when it is also used to facilitate peer interaction rather than as a replacement for teachers or tutors.

Therefore, educational technology should not be seen as a stand-alone tool to be set aside in the classroom. Effective use of educational technology requires a well-planned and supported technology-classroom integration. Although educational technology has been traditionally seen as a tool to provide cognitive and

academic exercises, educational technology also requires adult attention to ensure that it is used in a way that does not interfere with children's peer and teacher-child interactions. However, when properly introduced to the classroom, technology can be a great asset to early childhood education in facilitating children's cognitive, personal-social, and language development. *See also* Constructionism.

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Marina Umaschi Bers and Clement Chau

TECSE. *See* Topics in Early Childhood Special Education

Television

Television viewing is a part of the regular daily routine of most American children. Despite the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics that young children below the age of two years should not watch television, a report funded by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation indicated that 74 percent of children below age two have watched television, and, on a typical day, 59 percent watch an average of two hours and five minutes. In a national survey including 145 families with two- and three-year-olds, parents reported that their child watches an average of about two hours (159 minutes) each day. School-age children spend almost three hours per day watching television. Thirty percent of children up to age three and 43 percent of children four to six years old have televisions in their bedrooms. A more recent survey of parents found that the mean age infants and toddlers began watching videos and television was about six months and nine and three-quarter months respectively. The mean number of hours that infants and toddlers under two years watched television per day was about one hour and twelve minutes, slightly less time than two- and three-year-olds watch television (Singer and Singer, 2005).

Formal Features and Special Characteristics of Television

Properties, conventions, and formal features that distinguish television from other media, and that affect children's comprehension are (1) *attention demand*—the continuous movements on the screen that evoke an orienting response; (2) *brevity of sequence*—the brief interactions among people, brief

portrayal of events, the brief commercials (10–30 seconds long; (3) *interference effects*—the rapid succession of material that interferes with rehearsal and assimilation of material; (4) *complexity of presentation*—the cross-modality presentation of material (sound, sight, and printed word, especially in commercials); (5) *visual orientation*—television is concrete, oriented toward spatial imagery; and (6) *emotional range*—the vividness of action (special effects, music, lighting).

It may be difficult for a young child to comprehend slow motion or speeded motion, the juxtaposition of scenes or split-screen technique, the use of subliminal techniques (two scenes to be viewed simultaneously, used often in dream sequences), special effects such as zooming in, making things appear small, or growing gradually in front of your eyes. Other television features include “magical” effects involving distortions, fades, or dissolves, changes in figure and ground, and the rapid disappearances of persons or objects.

Research Methods

There are numerous techniques used to study the effects of television on young children: *survey* research, *laboratory studies* dealing with experimental and various control conditions, *cross-sectional field studies*, and *longitudinal* approaches in which data obtained are examined for their possible effects on overt behaviors over an extended period of time. *Meta-analysis* is a technique for examining an accumulation of separately conducted studies that have comparisons between experimental and control conditions, or of contrasting groups with respect to relevant cognitive and behavior variables.

Results of Television Exposure

In the 1980s, a series of experimental studies examined the effects of television on preschool children with a particular emphasis on imagination and aggression. Highly imaginative children tended to watch programs chiefly on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and had parents who also valued imagination. Children who were watching at least three hours or more a day were *less* imaginative than those children who only watched one hour a day. The less imaginative children had a history of watching action/adventure TV programs and cartoons, all associated with high levels of rapid activity and **violence**. Their parents also proved to be less likely to control their children’s TV viewing (Singer and Singer, 1981). Children who watched action detective programs or particular cartoons or programs with superheroes were more likely to be aggressive both verbally and physically in the day care centers and at home than children who were lighter television viewers and whose parents controlled the kinds of programs and number of hours that children viewed television. Researchers followed children over a year to four or five years later, and found that early heavy TV viewing of more violent programming was associated with subsequent overt aggressive behavior at home and in school (Singer and Singer, 2005).

Another example of a longitudinal approach involved a long-term follow-up from preschool-age to middle and high school and included children who predominantly watched programs on Public Television such as *Sesame Street*. These

children performed better in school academically and behaviorally than children who chiefly watched commercial programs. Large-scale longitudinal studies have presented evidence linking frequent exposure to violent media in childhood with aggression later in life (Anderson et al., 2003).

Educational programs that include fantasy elements and offer solutions to problems have been shown to foster imagination and creativity and prosocial behaviors such as sharing, taking turns, and cooperation. Research, however, employing a content analysis of the five most popular prime-time family sitcoms among children ages two to eleven years found that, while sitcoms featured child characters in the major story line, the emphasis was primarily on negative emotions such as fear and anger. In experiments with infants aged ten to twelve months, the older children showed increases in negative emotions after viewing an actress who vividly expressed these negative emotions. It appears from this study that by one year, a child is able to process the social information and the emotional state of people depicted on television (Singer and Singer, 2005). Research concerning television's effects on children's fears has been summarized by Cantor (2006). As children grow older, they become more responsive to realistic dangers than to those depicted in fantasy programs.

In terms of health, studies have found that viewing frightening material raised children's heart rates and that the more children watched television the less likely they were to engage in physical activity (Durant et al., 1994). **Obesity** and its relationship to television is being investigated by researchers, but most of the data reported are correlational rather than causal. Young children are influenced by advertising of toys and food products, and children as young as two years already have established beliefs about particular brands (Hite and Hite, 1995).

In a meta-analysis of twenty-three studies, television was found to be negatively correlated with reading ability; the magnitude of the correlation rises sharply after 20 hours of television viewing (Walberg and Haertel, 1992). Viewing more than three hours per day seems to be the critical peak in the decline of reading ability. It may be that television viewing displaces the time needed for practicing reading. Researchers have found a significant association between the amount of television watched between ages one and three, and subsequent attention problems at age seven (Christakis et al., 2004). Children who watch heavy amounts of television tend to have shorter attention spans.

In a longitudinal study by Lemish and Rice (1985), observations of children's behaviors were recorded while they watched television in their own homes. The children were newborn to three years of age, actively involved in the process of language acquisition. The main categories of children's verbalizations were as follows: labeling objects on the screen, asking questions about the program, repeating television dialogue or parent comments about the content, and describing the content. Parents acted as mediators, with their verbalizations paralleling the child's. Linebarger and Walker (2005) concluded from experimental studies with babies observed every three months from age six months to the age of two that programs featuring tight narrative structures that used language-promoting strategies predicted greater vocabulary and more expressive language development than did programs like Teletubbies that emphasized baby talk and looser story content.

Controlling Television

Since broadcast television encompasses stations that transmit their signals through a technology that uses publicly owned airwaves, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has the power to grant broadcast licenses and to create regulations that are related to public interest. The Children's Television Act of 1990 enacted by Congress and implemented by the FCC led to the requirement that broadcasters include three hours per week of educational programming for children aired between six in the morning and eleven in the evening. Cable and other nonbroadcast technologies are not bound by any obligation to serve the public interest since they do not use the broadcast airwaves for distribution of their programming.

The V-chip, a filtering device that parents can use to block material that has the potential of harming children, became part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 stipulating that all new television sets must be so equipped. Commercially produced devices include lock boxes that parents can purchase to block out programming that they consider inappropriate for their children. Program ratings by age, violence, sex, adult dialogue, and fantasy violence are supposed to appear in the corner of a TV screen at the start of each show; they are inconsistently applied and there are no content descriptors. There are discrepancies often between ratings offered in newsprint, guides, and those appearing on the television screen (Singer and Singer, 2001).

Specific curricula using specially prepared manuals (and sometimes video accompaniments that explain the electronic workings of television's special effects), that discuss commercials, violence, and fantasy/reality distinctions, and the different genres (news, drama, documentary, cartoon, quiz show) are available to schools and to parents for controlling and mediating children's television viewing. Research indicates that children who are exposed to such curricula have a clearer understanding of how television transmits information and entertainment than children who have not been exposed to such curricula (Singer and Singer, 2001).

In addition to the industry monitoring the quality of television, a parent or other caregiver has a significant role to play concerning the content and age appropriateness of the material that a child watches. Adult caregivers can mediate by explaining TV content, asking questions to determine how accurately a child has processed the material, controlling the number of hours a child views each day, and selecting programs that are age- and content-appropriate. When the parent is an active participant with the child, television has the potential to be a good teacher. *See also* Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; Development, Language; Parents and Parent Involvement.

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Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer

Temperament

Temperament is a set of personal characteristics and patterns that emerge early in life and persist over time. Most researchers and clinicians interpret temperament as the result of innate biological and heritable predispositions. Lists of temperamental traits vary, including characteristics as disparate as activity level and introversion or shyness. Combinations of temperamental characteristics are often grouped together to describe a child's personality profile, an "easy child" or "the difficult child." Although seen as long-standing, such traits are not immutable. At any given time, a child's temperament represents both constitutional predispositions and the history of how the child's environment has responded to those traits.

The uniqueness of individual temperament has been recognized throughout history and across cultures. Stories about people almost always involve description of temperament; Shakespeare's Hamlet, for example, was impulsive and indecisive at the same time. A person's temperament can be what attracts others or pushes them away. An understanding of temperament can help early childhood educators identify children's learning styles, communicate more effectively with parents, and reflect on their own expectations of children.

Among the most thorough longitudinal investigations of temperament is that of Thomas and Chess. These researchers followed children from early infancy into adulthood periodically rating their subjects on nine characteristics, activity level, rhythmicity, adaptability, approach-withdrawal, mood, intensity of reaction, attention span-persistence, distractibility, and threshold of response. Over the years they have found that these traits tend to persist over time; they are not entirely immutable, and certain clusters of traits may make success in school more difficult to achieve. For example, a highly active child who is both distractible

and not persistent at tasks may have difficulty in a structured school setting. Some children diagnosed with **Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD-ADHD)** may be at the extreme end of what Thomas and Chess have described as a pattern of behavioral characteristics.

One characteristic that has received a great deal of attention by both developmental psychologists and early educators is shyness or introversion. Every group that an early childhood educator encounters will include some children who are outgoing and gregarious and others who are passive and avoid social contact. The research of Jerome Kagan demonstrates that babies who respond to novel experiences with fussiness at 4 months tend to be shy children in their preschool and early school years. According to Kagan, these children have a physiological response to what they experience as stressful. The resultant behavior pattern may vary from immediate withdrawal to cautious approach depending on how the child has been supported throughout childhood in new situations, but the underlying physiological response reflects an innate predisposition.

Temperamental characteristics carry different meanings in different cultural settings. For example, among the Inuit studied by Jean Briggs (1998) the degree of desired fearfulness of adults contrasts with the gregariousness encouraged in many European American families. In another example, Chinese child-rearing practices seem to support reticence as a strength, whereas shyness is seen as undesirable in Canadian families (Chen et al., 1998).

Parents may respond differently to children with different temperaments. Babies born with a tendency to be irritable may have parents who respond to these traits with their own discomfort and even anger or they may provide a soothing environment. Over time these children may look very different from each other despite their innate temperamental tendencies. One expresses irritability in responding to new situations, the other mediates her emotional response with the self-regulating strategies she learned from responsive caregiving. The behavioral match or mismatch between parents and children is partly attributable to temperament. Such match or mismatch may also operate in teacher-child interactions.

In many early childhood classrooms it is the active, gregarious children that draw attention from the teacher and the quiet, passive children who seem to carry on without much teacher involvement. An understanding of the temperamental profile of each child can help avoid such inequity in classrooms. As it relates to learning, for example in how a child approaches new curriculum materials, an understanding of temperament allows the teacher to support each child's learning process. One child may be very persistent to the point of not wanting to clean up when the time for project work is over; another child may require a good deal of support to stay with an activity. Such understanding may also help in managing peer interactions; an impulsive child who approaches other children with passion and energy may require help in softening his approach so that other children can tolerate his play. Conversely, the more socially passive child may need support in entering a mutual play situation.

Temperament is also a useful topic for communication with parents. Parents want teachers to know their children as people. A simple description of the child's developmental progress according to standard sets of milestones rarely

convinces parents that the teacher truly knows the child. Temperament provides a vehicle for a more complete communication about the child and what the child is capable of. T. Berry Brazelton's Touchpoints approach utilizes temperament as a particularly effective way of establishing common understanding of the child in developing a relationship with a parent.

Temperament tells a teacher how a child operates in the world of materials and people. As such it provides an essential means for understanding children as unique individuals rather than as a collection of skills or developmental competencies. *See also* Parent and Parent Involvement.

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John Hornstein

Temple, Alice (1871–1946)

Early in the twentieth century, the Alice Temple program was a vital element in the integration of **kindergarten** and elementary schools and in the training programs for their teachers. She became a model for those working at both levels of the educational system.

From birth until her retirement in 1932, Alice Temple lived and worked in Chicago. Her kindergarten teacher training began in the Chicago Free Kindergarten Association program at age eighteen. In 1904, she enrolled as a full-time student at the University of Chicago, where John Dewey and Anna Bryan had established a curriculum reflecting children's interests. She continued there as a teacher, developing a model kindergarten-primary program and becoming chairman of their new Kindergarten-Primary Department in 1929.

Kindergarten, originally for children aged three to six or seven, had functioned outside the public school system after its introduction in the 1870s. In the early 1900s, it was accepted as the "first step on the ladder" for the public elementary schools of Illinois, but was limited to one or two years before first grade. Temple based the integration of kindergarten and primary grades upon Dewey's idea of continuity between these two levels, a proposal that fit into the public and professional discourse about social efficiency and scientific measurement. Her system, coauthored with Samuel Parker, was published in 1928 as *Unified Kindergarten and First Grade Teaching*.

Temple joined the **International Kindergarten Union (IKU)** in 1900. She was identified as a "Liberal" when divisions developed between those who maintained

a structured use of curriculum materials and those who credited Friedrich Froebel for originating the kindergarten in the 1830s but were heeding his directives to modify it through continued study. She advocated free play with building blocks, a “housekeeping area” with miniature utensils and dolls, and varied art activities to be used creatively. She emphasized, however, that some subject matter should be determined by the teachers and that appropriate assistance and guidance be given to the young students.

Temple was involved with many IKU committees and activities, with elective offices including vice-president (1923–1925) and president (1925–1927). She was instrumental in establishing their journal, *Childhood Education*, in 1924. After the IKU merged with the National Council of Primary Education to become the Association for Childhood Education in 1930, she served on its Advisory Board until her death in 1946. “She was always ready to throw in her efforts with those of others wherever she could serve. *Cooperation* was the keynote of her working methods as were *unity* and *continuity* the theme of her motivation.” (Snyder 1972, p. 212)

Temple had a major influence upon students who became leaders in the IKU and the emerging nursery school movement, not only from the course content but by patterning their own professional lives upon hers. Perhaps her lifetime is best summarized in Snyder’s list of *Dauntless Women in Early Childhood Education*: “Alice Temple, a great teacher. Her students spoke of her reverently, as they acclaimed the lasting influence she had exerted on them and then found it difficult to recall specific things she had said” (1972, p. 360).

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Dorothy W. Hewes and Shunab Chung

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program is a federal block grant that provides financial assistance and work opportunities to families in need by allowing states the freedom and flexibility to determine how best to meet citizens’ needs. Enacted in 1996 as part of welfare reform, TANF funding may be used to provide cash benefits to low-income families, funding for child care activities, and support for other work-related activities. With over 3.6 million children receiving some type of TANF support each month during FY 2004, it is clear that this program has a significant impact on a large number of children in the United States (Administration for Children and Families, 2005).

TANF was established through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. In 1992, presidential candidate Bill Clinton gave a campaign speech proclaiming the need for drastic changes in welfare policy, asserting that “no one who works full-time and has children at home should be poor anymore. No one who can work should be able to stay on welfare forever” (Danziger, 1999, p. 1). After President Clinton took office, he appointed an interagency task force to study possible solutions to this problem, and develop legislation to reform welfare policy. Although there was much controversy surrounding the bill, in August of 1996, Congress passed PRWORA and President Clinton signed the act into law (Danziger, 1999).

Welfare reform under PRWORA represents a dramatic change in the way cash assistance and support services are delivered to children and families. The TANF block grant, administered by the Office of Family Assistance, replaces the previous Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS), and Emergency Assistance (EA) programs (Administration for Children and Families, n.d.a). The general mission of TANF is to move welfare recipients to work and self-sufficiency, and to ensure that welfare receipt is short-term and not “a way of life.” The four stated purposes of TANF are as follows:

- to assist needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes;
- to reduce dependency [upon government] of needy families by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- to prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies;
- to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The legislation encourages states to be flexible, innovative, and creative in the ways in which they provide supports to working families. However, the legislation also establishes some basic requirements for the program. For instance, TANF recipients must begin working as soon as they are job-ready, or no more than two years after they began receiving cash assistance. Work activities under TANF are broadly defined, and include education or training programs, subsidized or unsubsidized employment, community services, and job search. Finally, adults who are eligible for cash benefits may only receive them for up to 60 months (and often less, at each state’s discretion).

States received \$17 billion in fiscal year 2004 for activities related to the four purposes of the block grant. States can use TANF to support low-income families by providing monthly cash benefits, child care subsidies, transportation assistance, tax credits, and assistance related to work activities. These activities directly affect children whose families are eligible for TANF support. Primarily, children benefit from the monthly cash benefits their families receive, and also from the child care subsidies that allow children to attend child care activities while their parents work or attend education or training programs. TANF dollars can be used directly for child care, or can be transferred to states’ Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) for child care subsidies (Administration for Children and Families, n.d.b). TANF funding can also be transferred to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and used for activities related to social services for adults and children, including services related to preventing or remedying abuse or neglect of children. Much

of the funding allocated under SSBG is spent on protective services for children, foster care services, and services for disabled children. SSBG funding is also used for child care subsidies and other child care activities (Administration for Children and Families, n.d.c).

As TANF represents a complete overhaul of the welfare system of the past few decades, numerous studies have been conducted measuring the various effects of the program. In general, results from these studies of TANF are mixed. While welfare reform has resulted in decreased caseloads and increased employment of single mothers (largely due to the 60-month time limit for benefits), not all families who get off of TANF experience an improved financial situation once they begin working (Fremstad, 2004; Haskins et al., 2001). Currently, the federal government is in the process of working on TANF reauthorization, and many research and advocacy organizations have suggested modifications to the current policy to make TANF more effective for the children and families it affects. These modifications include changes to specific aspects of the law, such as the number of weekly work hours required for parents with children, programs and policies related to adolescents and especially to teen parents, and policies related to child care and the choices parents face when returning to work (Levin-Epstein, 2002).

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Abby Copeman

Thorndike, Edward L. (1847–1949)

Edward Lee Thorndike was a leader in educational psychology at the turn of the twentieth century. Thorndike grew up in New England, where his father was a Methodist minister. He attended Wesleyan University in 1891 and showed intellectual independence from his father when writing for the Eclectic Society and by later referring to himself as an agnostic. While at Wesleyan, Thorndike studied the work of William James and later credited James for his own devotion to psychology. Thorndike later attended Harvard for two years, then Columbia University. At Columbia, Thorndike found a second mentor in James Cattell. Thorndike's

thesis was entitled “Animal Intelligence, An Experimental Study of the Associative Processes in Animals,” wherein he explained learning as the forming of associations between situations and impulses to action within that situation. Thorndike’s thesis is noted as a starting point for experiments in animal psychology.

Thorndike accepted a teaching position at Western Reserve’s College for Women, where he taught two courses on education and teaching theories. In 1899, Thorndike returned to Columbia University and was selected for Teachers College as Associate Professor of Genetic Psychology. Thorndike also taught child psychology but held that courses were generally a waste of time because education came best through personal reading and study. He married in 1900 and subsequently wrote *Human Nature Club*, *The Elements of Psychology*, and *Principles of Teaching*.

Thorndike spent a decade researching animal and human psychology. He believed that progress in science led to social advance. He studied monkeys, wrote the article “The Evolution of Human Intellect,” and conducted experiments with A.R. Woodworth. In 1903, Thorndike published *Educational Psychology* and, later, *An Introduction to the Theory of Mental and Social Measurements* as the first complete theoretical and statistical handbook in social science. Thorndike believed that individuality was the key concept of school theory and practice and stated that the school must respect the needs and capacities of individual students. “Individuality” was his first extended statement about differential psychology, and his three-volume series on *Education Psychology* was published at the peak of his influence. This volume focused upon learning as the central issue of psychology and asserted that man is by nature a connection-forming creature with many possibilities. Thorndike later discovered high correlations between reading and intelligence tests. His *Thorndike Arithmetics* became adapted as a statewide text and was widely used.

Thorndike was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1917. He became more involved in research when Teachers College established its Institute of Education Research. Receiving honors at the international level in 1937 and 1938, he became President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Thorndike was known for the extension of measurement to all education and for his learning theory. He believed education to be a theory, an art, and a science.

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Charlotte Anderson

Topics in Early Childhood Special Education (TECSE)

Topics in Early Childhood Special Education (TECSE) is one of the leading scholarly, peer-reviewed journals in the area of early intervention and early childhood special education. Its mission is to communicate information about early intervention, which is defined as services to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers at risk for, or who display, developmental disabilities and their families (Carta,

2005). The journal publishes empirical research, policy analyses, literature reviews, and position papers. Beginning in April 1981, it originally published four topical issues each year, and has evolved into publishing annually three topical issues and one open or nontopical issue. Articles from *TECSE* have influenced policy and practices for infants and young children with disabilities and are often cited by authors of papers in other journals. *See also* Special Education, Early Childhood.

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Samuel Odom

Touchpoints

Touchpoints is a strength-based practical approach of working with families of young children and is based on Dr. T. Berry Brazelton's forty years of clinical and research experience as a pediatrician. The central notion around which this approach is organized is that of "Touchpoints," or the predictable bursts, regressions, and pauses that occur over the course of a child's development. Touchpoints typically precede a spurt in a particular line of development, and are often accompanied by parental frustration and self-doubt. For practitioners concerned with the health and well-being of the child and family, these Touchpoints can be seen as points of change for the child and the parent, as well as for the family as a whole. While the Touchpoints approach was initially implemented in health care settings, it was also originally intended, and has since been adapted, for use in a variety of settings including early intervention, social services, public health, and early child care and education organizations.

The Touchpoints program is designed to help family-serving professionals in such multidisciplinary settings build their knowledge about child development and develop collaborative strategies for working with families. A particular goal of the program is to help professionals use these strategies to foster a sense of competence in parents and empower them in their parenting abilities. Thus, the Touchpoints program operates from the framework that each and every parent is the expert on his or her child. Through this process, the approach seeks to optimize child development, support healthy families, and enhance professional development.

The Touchpoints framework has both developmental and clinical components. The program recognizes that early childhood is a time of great change for both children and families. The approach views development as a discontinuous process rather than a linear progression of attaining developmental milestones. However, while development is not viewed as a linear or continuous process, there are many periods of change that can be predicted. These predictable periods of change are often accompanied by disorganization as children may learn new skills in one area, but simultaneously regress in other areas of development. For example, when a child is learning to walk, he/she may not be able to remain on a regular sleep schedule. These times of change may affect not only the child's behavior, but also the entire family system.

Because “Touchpoints” are predictable, the approach views such times of disorganization as valuable opportunities to help parents anticipate and plan for the challenges they face in raising young children). By providing such “anticipatory guidance” (Stadtler et al., 1995), family-serving professionals, including early childhood educators, can help parents recognize the strengths they already have and gain confidence in their own parenting abilities and instincts. The Touchpoints approach, then, operates from a clinical framework that assumes that, if parents can anticipate and better understand the periods of disorganization in their children’s development, then they will feel more empowered in their abilities to effectively respond to such challenging times.

The Brazelton Touchpoints Center offers a training specifically designed for early child care and education providers to help enhance their knowledge of child development and develop collaborative strategies for working with the families in their programs. The trainings are organized around a set of guiding principles, and assumptions about families and professionals, which serve as a framework for reflective practice for early child care and education providers. The training encourages providers to avoid advice-giving and prescriptive approaches to communication, and instead employ collaborative approaches to help parents gain confidence in their own decisions and parenting strategies. Ultimately, parents’ recognition of their own strengths should, ideally, have a positive effect on their children’s well-being and development.

The Touchpoints early child care and education training also focuses on the entire family system. Touchpoints in Early Child Care and Education represents a shift away from the idea of a *child* attending child care, and toward the goal of child care providers joining and supporting every *family* as a system of care around their child. Thus, the trainings provide strategies designed to not only improve parent-provider communication and relationships, but also to promote positive parent-child relationships. The Touchpoints approach recognizes that parents may often feel ambivalent about placing their children in out-of-home care, and that some may feel threatened by the relationships that their children are forming with their child care providers. Thus, while the Touchpoints approach values the parent-provider relationship, the ultimate goal of the program is to focus on and enhance relationships within the family.

By training teams of professionals from around the country, the Touchpoints approach has built a national network of training sites. Some of these sites focus primarily on training for early care and education professionals. Others are multidisciplinary and encourage the use of the Touchpoints approach in helping professionals who work with families communicate with each other, as they join families in systems of care. The approach has also been specifically adapted for use with families of children with special needs. Finally, an American Indian initiative (Mayo-Willis and Hornstein, 2003) has prompted further review and adaptation of the approach based upon cultural variation in child-rearing beliefs and practices.

The Touchpoints approach draws from Urie **Bronfenbrenner’s** (2001) ecological systems theory which views development as the product of interactions that take place between children and the multiple environments in which they live. According to this theory, stronger linkages between the various environments in

which a child lives, such as between home and child care, and more specifically between parents and child care providers, should have a positive influence on children's development and well-being. With the increasing numbers of families in the United States that are coming to rely on early child care and education services, Touchpoints provides a way to enhance provider–parent relationships, and ultimately promote the healthy development of young children and their families.

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Mallory I. Swartz and John Hornstein

Transitions/Continuity

Transitions are a part of everyone's life. Generally, a transition refers to the process in which an individual participates when moving from one setting to another. Changing schools or communities, entering the job market, marriage, and retirement are examples of normative, positive life transitions. At times, transitions may negatively impact an individual and/or family, such as divorce, death of a family member, or loss of a job. In the field of early childhood and early childhood special education, families and children experiencing transitions when leaving one program and entering another may encounter a smooth transition or one laden with difficulties. When transitions are supportive, the gaps that may have existed between the two programs are bridged, resulting in continuity (SERVE, 2002). Continuity refers to an uninterrupted connection or flow of services, such as a child leaving a Head Start setting and enrolling in a new preschool, or a child with special needs moving into another setting and receiving his therapy sessions without disruption. Continuity is critical to the success of transitions.

Transition considerations for typically developing children and their families must not be overlooked, as this time is critical in setting the stage for successful school experiences. Each child and family's transition experience is unique and, thereby, cannot be characterized by specific standards or procedures. However, Pianta and Kraft-Sayre (2003) developed five guiding principles that may be applied to transition planning for all young children. These include fostering relationships as resources, promoting continuity from preschool to kindergarten, focusing on family strengths, tailoring practices to individual needs, and forming collaborative relationships. The literature regarding transitions mirrors the principles described above. In addition, parents must be recognized as experts and empowered as advocates for their children. Although these principles may be

attainable, they require much preparation from all parties involved in transition planning.

Often parents of children with special needs experience a myriad of transitions long before their youngster reaches school age. Premature infants and those with birth complications may require the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and subsequent referral for early intervention services. Children diagnosed with developmental delays and their families must transition from early intervention provided in the home to an early childhood special education program in the local elementary school. The transition journey will continue as the child moves throughout school and into adulthood, each transition bringing its own challenges and successes.

Whether a child is transitioning from early intervention to preschool or preschool to kindergarten, transitions for some families may be matter of fact, while others are quite complex. Often concerns and stress are heightened during the process, and must be addressed accordingly. Issues such as differences in program philosophy and expectations, services provided, the level of parent involvement, and concerns related specifically to the child are only beginning points for transition planning. Specifically, a child's preschool program may permit parents to volunteer in the classroom, but in his new kindergarten classroom, the policy might not include parent volunteers except for field trips. The preschool curriculum may differ significantly from that of the kindergarten, and the focus may be more academic than developmental. Class size differs, parents may receive progress reports quarterly rather than weekly, and the child's classroom expectations will change. In the case of a child moving from early intervention to an early childhood special education classroom, children and families must adapt to an entirely different environment. Instead of a case manager or physical therapist coming to a family's home each week, a school bus transports the young child to an elementary school for his education. Rather than addressing a concern during a therapy session, a parent must contact her child's teacher to set up a conference among the child's service providers at school. These examples are part of the transition process and program continuity and will require some adjustment on the part of all parties involved with the child.

An effective transition serves as a bridge between two programs, going from the familiar and comfortable to the unknown and uncharted course. Some educators perceive transition as an ongoing effort to link a child's natural environment (home and family) with a support environment (the child's program) (Kagan and Neuman, 1998). In some instances, transitions consist of a series of activities that take place prior to a child's leaving one setting and entering another, characterized by a visit to the new placement, a meeting with parents, and an exchange of the child's records. Other transitions may include an interagency agreement between the sending agency and receiving program. The goal is to provide as smooth as possible transition with no disruption in services (continuity) for the child and family.

Part C, Public Law 105-17 (IDEA, 1997) provides early intervention services for children with disabilities birth through age two, and Part B regulates the delivery of services for children ages three through five. Within the child's Infant Family Service Plan (IFSP) and/or **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**, a transition plan

must be addressed in order to meet federal laws. A timeline serves as a roadmap for implementing the transition plan and should be established as early as the child's enrollment in the early intervention program. Although transition procedures are not mandated until 90 days prior to the actual transition, agencies, schools, parents, and children need much more than three months to put all the pieces in place for an effective transition. When considering a preschool-to-kindergarten transition, educators should contact parents at the beginning of the preschool year to initiate a connection between families, schools, and agencies in order to plan transition activities for families and children during the course of that year (Pianta and Kraft-Sayre, 2003).

Many states and individual school divisions or agencies have developed their own particular procedures for the implementation of transition plans. These plans often include specific timeframes for each aspect of the transition, such as dates set aside for parents and children to visit programs, deadlines for sending children's records, and/or guidelines for a transition coordinator to follow. Professionals involved in planning should guard against the transition becoming a series of events rather than a process that takes time and is intended as an individual plan for each child and family.

Because transitions are different for each child and family exiting one program and entering another, it is imperative that those identified as stakeholders periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the system. The input of parents, teachers, administrators, therapists and community agencies must be considered in the process to accommodate the needs of children and families. The ultimate result will be improved transitions for all persons involved.

The literature offers numerous suggestions of activities and procedures designed to prepare families, children, and receiving agencies or schools for the successful, smooth transition from the current program to the new program. The following suggestions serve as a starting point for planning transitions, and are applicable to most early childhood transitions. It is important to note that extenuating circumstances may arise in which much different activities would be more appropriate.

Transition planning for children with developmental delays must begin early in the child and family's interaction with the initial agency or program. It is as if parents should be told at the onset of services that the transition process will be initiated immediately to prepare them for future changes. For example, parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities need to be aware of services available to them when their child reaches age two or three. Although their child may or may not require further services beyond the early intervention program, parents should be prepared to consider alternatives available to them. A case manager, generally the early interventionist, should either serve as the transition coordinator or maintain close contact with that individual during the child's early intervention services. It is advisable to develop a transition timeline, even though some changes will most likely take place. Stakeholders will demonstrate a stronger ownership if a plan is visible and each person is included in the process.

The participation of parents is key to successful transitions. Parents need to be recognized for their expertise and concerns and priorities must be addressed at the onset. Agency and school personnel should protect parent and child

confidentiality, ensure compliance with federal and state mandates, and encourage and respect parental input. Parents should consider themselves partners in the process.

In transitions for typically developing children, such as home or preschool to kindergarten, or those for children with special needs, receiving programs should be aware of prospective students in order to be prepared to meet their needs should they be placed in their care. Staff members of sending and receiving programs should be introduced to each other to begin collaborative relationships. Where feasible, these individuals should be participants in assessments and meetings, striving to increase their visibility, knowledge, and involvement with children and families. When families visit programs they most likely will feel comfortable, welcomed, and willing to participate in the program activities with their children. Introducing parents to the principal, school nurse, office staff, therapists, and paraprofessionals, along with a tour of the facility, should help in alleviating fears of a large building for their little child. Inviting parents for a return visit or telephone call signifies openness on the part of staff.

An evening should be designated for meeting other perspective and current parents and staff members on an informal basis. Children and siblings should be invited to attend, and babysitting and refreshments provided. Parents should have an opportunity to learn about program curriculum and materials, participate in activities with their children, and to ask questions. A highlight for the evening could be the arrival of a school bus and driver inviting parents and children to board. At the end of the school year parents may be guests at graduation or a picnic, and during the summer months sending and receiving teachers might conduct home visits to new families. Finally, parents can be invited to attend an open house prior to the opening of school. Kindergartens may choose a staggered enrollment for the first few weeks of school in order to introduce the children to school on a gradual basis, or permit parents to spend the first several mornings in the classroom with their children.

Transition services are not achieved without careful planning, involvement of all stakeholders, an evaluation component, and the establishment of a timeline. Recognizing transition as a process instead of a series of activities, as individualized for each child, and as subject to change, will result in a smooth transition and continuity of services for everyone.

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Lucy Kachmarik

U

UNESCO. *See* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF. *See* United Nations Children’s Fund

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

Whenever one hears the two words *children* and *international*, UNICEF immediately comes to mind. First established in 1946, the acronym stood for the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund. In 1953, the words *International* and *Emergency* were officially dropped but the full acronym has remained the term used to refer to the United Nation’s Children’s Fund. In many parts of the world, UNICEF is much more than an acronym, and instead embodies a philosophy that children—and particularly children in the “developing,” or Majority World—matter. That philosophy argues that children, especially those affected by challenges now rarely encountered in Western industrialized countries, deserve a chance for healthy and fully productive lives.

The establishment of UNICEF in 1946 was a result of Cold War politics. When the United States sought to substitute the Marshall Plan (reconstruction support for Allied powers only) for the existing UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (which provided support for all countries east or west devastated by World War II), the delegates of Poland and Norway objected that children’s fate should not be tied to geopolitical divides. The result of their intervention on behalf of children was the creation of resolution 57(1), establishing the International Children’s Emergency Fund. At the time the resolution went through the United Nations’ structure on December 11, 1946, the United Nations itself was only a year old. In 1953, UNICEF achieved permanent status as a UN organization. Throughout the 1950s, the primary focus of UNICEF was on children’s health and its primary activities were focused on efforts to control or eradicate epidemic diseases. In 1959 the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Those Rights included protection, education, health care, shelter, and

good nutrition. In 1961 UNICEF expanded its interests from child health to the “whole child,” and child education began to play a much larger role in UNICEF.

Since 1989, with the UN General Assembly’s adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 1990 World Summit for Children, UNICEF has become an ever stronger force for children’s rights, seeing such rights as the foundation for a broad set of child supportive activities. From an education and child development perspective, UNICEF has, for much of its history, not had a particularly strong early childhood focus. When it has focused on the young child it has tended to be with a health or nutrition emphasis. Commencing in the late 1990s and early 2000s, UNICEF, along with other key international players including the World Bank, greatly increased their focus on the young child. These efforts have been characterized by a holistic appreciation of the child and an emphasis on achieving a higher level of integration across the diversity of services and programs available to children. These emphases are generally being advanced from the perspective of an overall poverty reduction orientation.

It is anticipated that the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for 2015, with their strong emphasis on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, will drive much of the global development agenda throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century. While early childhood education is not specifically mentioned in the MDG, effective arguments can be put forward regarding the role of early childhood education in achieving the MDG. Indeed, the degree to which the field of early childhood education is a key player in international development work in the period 2000–2010 is dependent upon those connections being made evident. *See also* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

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Web Sites: UNICEF Web site, http://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_history.html

Alan Pence

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

Founded on 16 November 1945, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is a specialized United Nations agency that seeks “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture to further universal respect” (UNESCO Constitution, article 1). Based in Paris, France, UNESCO is currently represented by 191 member states and has a global network of fifty-eight field offices and eleven institutes and centres.

The main emphasis of UNESCO’s activities in education is the global campaign on Education for All, which seeks to provide basic education for all children, youth, and adults so as to enable them to embark on a path of lifelong learning. The Education for All campaign serves as the cornerstone of UNESCO’s education programs by focusing on the expansion and diversification of the provision of basic education to reach the largest number of potential learners. Particular

emphasis is given to the issues of quality and access, especially for marginalized and excluded individuals.

With regards to the field of early childhood care and education, UNESCO leads the international policy drive for an integrated early childhood care and education system that encompasses the holistic development of the child. UNESCO's mission to support early childhood policy development is guided by two major international frameworks: the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, which states that learning begins at birth and confirms early childhood care and education as an integral component of basic education; and the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All. Special importance is placed on Goal One of the Dakar Framework for Action, which aims to expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education for all children.

With the aim of building a solid foundation for a child's lifelong learning, the Early Childhood program of UNESCO, part of the Division of Basic Education, actively works with Member States in their efforts to develop and strengthen their national capacity to meet this target of the Dakar Framework. To this end, UNESCO publishes the *Policy Briefs on Early Childhood* and regularly undertakes policy review work in selected countries. To date, this policy review work has included the national early childhood policies of Indonesia, Kenya, Kazakhstan, and Brazil.

In terms of strategy for policy development in the early childhood field, UNESCO focuses on holistic pre-primary education for children who are three to five years of age and on their smooth transition to primary education. This approach fully encompasses all elements of children's emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development, as well as their nutrition and health needs. To address the particular needs of children who are from ages zero to three, countries also are recommended to have a phased plan to be implemented jointly between the national education and social sectors. Through its active collaboration with government officials, UNESCO works toward the goal of expanding and improving early childhood care and education, as well as toward the international development goal of universal primary education. For more information on UNESCO's activities in early childhood education, go to <http://www.unesco.org/education/ecf>. See also United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Soo-Hyang Choi

V

Video Games. *See* Computer and Video Game Play in Early Childhood

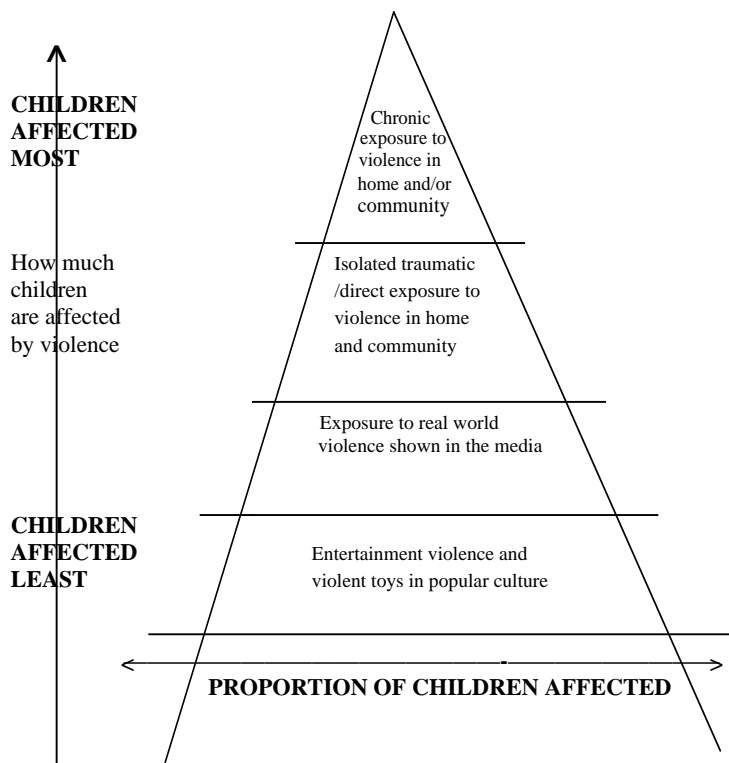
Violence and Young Children

Many kinds of violence occur in the daily lives of children growing up today. They see entertainment violence on the screen—in TV programs, movies, video and computer games. There are highly popular toys connected to violent TV programs and other media that encourage children to imitate in their play the violence that they see on the screen. There is real-world violence that children see in the news—weapons exploding, adults hurting adults, adults hurting children, even children hurting children. And then there is the violence that a growing number of children experience directly in their own homes and beyond, whether from an isolated trauma or as a regular part of their lives in violent communities or in war zones (Feerick and Silverman, 2006). The following are some examples that illustrate this fact:

A child care program is out on a field trip. As the children are about to cross a busy street a police officer offers to stop the traffic so the children may cross safely. One child runs to the teacher, grabs his leg and starts to scream. The teacher finds out later that the police arrested the child's father the previous weekend when the child was present.

A kindergartner walks into her classroom and announces to the other children in the entry area that she wasn't in school the day before because her grandmother died. Another child looks up at her and asks, "Who shot her?"

On September 12, 2001, a teacher notices several children building a structure with large cardboard blocks. Two children get inside and the others aggressively crash it down. They pull out the two children who were inside and report that they are "dead."



The Continuum of Violence in Children's Lives. Copied with permission from *Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom*, 2nd ed., by Diane E. Levin.

A teacher struggles to deal with the use of toy weapons in her classroom. Several children try to turn anything they can find into one. When she tells them “no weapons in school,” they sneak around trying to create and play with symbolic weapons when they think she isn't looking.

The violence in children's lives can be thought of as fitting along a continuum of severity, as shown in the figure. At the bottom is entertainment violence that is most prevalent in American society and touches most children's lives. At the top are the most extreme forms of violence—chronic and direct exposure in the immediate environment, which fewer children experience, at least in most parts of the United States, but which builds onto exposure to the more prevalent forms of violence below it on the pyramid. The degree to which children's development, ideas, and behavior are affected by violence is likely to increase as they move up the continuum, but few children growing up today are likely to avoid experiencing some form of exposure to violence (Levin, 2003).

The Impact of Violence on Young Children

The effects of violence are often most obvious for the most severely involved children, those at the top of the violence continuum. Anna Freud's work during World War II was among the first to direct attention to the devastating effects violence could have on children and how adults could help them cope (Freud and Burlingame, 1943). Since the 1980s, clinicians have recognized that posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can result, a condition whereby children exhibit such symptoms as flashbacks to the traumatic event(s), hypervigilance, regression, sleep troubles, and increased levels of aggression (Garbarino et al., 1999; Groves, 2002). Children with PTSD generally require extended therapeutic help to work through the symptoms.

For early childhood practitioners, it can be helpful to look at the range of ways violence can affect all children to varying degrees (Levin, 2003). First, it is important to keep in mind that children do not experience or understand violence as adults do. Children make their own unique meanings from what they see and hear. They do this based on such things as their age, prior experiences, and individual temperament. For instance, the boy who panicked when he saw a policeman on the street the night after a policeman arrested his father is using his prior negative experience to interpret the new experience negatively as well. So did the child who asked "who shot her" after hearing the grandmother had just died; children who observe regular shootings, whether on television or in their neighborhood, might reasonably assume that if someone dies it is because he or she is shot!

A second concern that educators share is the influence of exposure to violence on how children see the world. Children learn, from both entertainment violence and the violence that they experience directly, that the world is a dangerous place, adults may be unable to protect them, and weapons and fighting are needed to keep people safe. In this situation, one of the most basic human needs—a sense of safety and trust—can be seriously undermined (Erikson, 1950).

Third, the early years is a time when children are working to establish separate male or female identities who can effectively deal with and have an impact on the world. They are developing the confidence and skills they need to get their needs met and solve the problems they encounter, hopefully without violence. And yet, exposure to violence can make children feel that fighting and using weapons are necessary in order to be strong, independent, and competent. Exposure to violence also gives children powerful stereotypes about the relationship of males and females to violence.

Fourth, the period of early childhood is a time when children are learning how to participate in relationships with others and how to rely on and support others in mutually respectful ways as a part of a caring community. As they succeed, children develop a sense of connectedness and belonging that can help them feel secure enough to try new things, experiment, explore, learn, and grow as autonomous individuals. Violence undermines children's ability to develop positive interpersonal skills or a sense of connection with others. The rugged individual who can protect himself or herself is the model held up to be emulated.

Needing others is associated with vulnerability and helplessness. And violence is often seen as the method of choice for solving conflicts with others.

Current theoretical interpretations of the impact of violence on children suggest that they need help understanding the violence they see and overcoming the fears it can create. They often do this through their play, art, storytelling, or writing (as they get older), or by talking to a caring adult. It is through this work that a sense of equilibrium is achieved and learning and development are fostered (Garbarino et al., 1999; Groves, 2002). This may be why teachers, like the one described earlier, so often find young children of today sneaking around with pretend guns more than they did in the past. It also helps us understand Freud and Burlingham's (1947) accounts of children playing out their experiences in World War II England as well as more recent descriptions of children on the West Bank in Palestine playing out scenarios of Israeli soldiers breaking into houses (Levin and Carlsson-Paige, 2006).

Children's ability to engage in the kinds of activities that can help them work through their violent experiences can be seriously undermined by the violence in their lives (Terr, 1990). Their energy and resources are diverted into trying to cope with the violence and the lack of safety that it can bring. The increasing amounts of time they spend with media give them less time to engage in activities that would help them work it out. Then when they do play, it can be taken over by the violence, and at the same time, controlled by highly realistic media-linked toys of violence. When this happens they tend to use imitative, rather than creative, play to meet their needs and be ready to move on. Thus, as the need to work through violence increases, children's ability to work it through can be seriously impaired (Levin and Carlsson-Paige, 2006).

Finally, what children see, hear, and do in their environment becomes the content they use for building ideas about the world. The ideas they build are then used for interpreting new experience and building new ideas. When society provides children with extensive violent content, it is hard for them not to come to see violence as central to how the world works and how they will fit into it. In this way, violence can become a powerful part of the foundation onto which later ideas are built (Levin 2004).

Professional Responses and Responsibilities to Violence in Children's Lives

We now know enough about how seriously violence can threaten the healthy development of young children to conclude that as we work to reduce the violence, we must also consciously work to counteract the harm. Children need the help of adults to process what they have seen, to feel safe in spite of the violence, and to learn alternative lessons to the ones violence teaches. The following table suggests strategies that begin to address the harmful effects. And the more we can infuse them into everything we do with children, rather than seeing them as a series of isolated tasks or lessons, the more successful we will be at meeting children needs in these violent times (Levin, 2003; Rice and Groves, 2005; Silva et al., 2002).

Strategies for violence prevention with young children

<i>How Violence Undermines Development</i>	<i>What Children Need to Counteract the Harm</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As children feel unsafe and see the world is dangerous and adults can't keep them safe, energy goes to keeping selves safe and violence is one salient way to do it.• Sense of self as a separate person who can have a positive, meaningful effect on the world is undermined, so many children do not have many skills for feeling powerful and competent, getting their needs met or solving problems without violence.• Sense of mutual respect and interdependence is undermined as violence becomes a central part of the behavioral repertoire children learn about how to treat others. Relying on others is associated with vulnerability.• Narrowly defined and rigid gender division—where boys are violent and powerful and girls are sexy and weak—and racial, ethnic stereotyping often associated with violence undermine human development and relationships.• Increased need to tell their stories and construct meaning of violence in their lives through such activities as discussions, creative play, art, and storytelling.• It is harder for children to work through violence as tools for doing so are undermined by time and energy spent trying to cope and keep safe, time spent watching TV, toys that promote imitation of violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A secure, predictable environment where they feel adults can keep them safe as they learn how to keep themselves and others safe.• To learn how to take responsibility, positively affect what happens in their environment, and feel powerful and important and meet their individual needs without fighting.• Many opportunities to experience and contribute to a caring community in which people learn how to help and rely on others and work out their problems in mutually respectful and agreeable ways.• Exposure to males, females, and diverse peoples with wide-ranging and overlapping behaviors, interests and skills who all treat each other with respect and work out problems without violence.• Wide-ranging opportunities to work through and talk about violence issues, develop rich and meaningful art, stories, and play with open-ended play materials.• Active facilitation of skills necessary to develop meanings, work through violence and feel safe—imagination, creativity, problem-solving ability, play and communication skills, and models for nonviolent behavior.

Adapted with permission from *Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom*, 2nd ed., by Diane E. Levin.

The global community must deal with the root causes of the increasing levels of violence in many children's lives—including rising levels of poverty and inequality, domestic and community violence, global conflict, news violence on TV screens in so many young children's homes, and marketing of entertainment violence to children by media and corporations. But in the meantime, there is much we can and must do in our work with children in group settings and their families to counteract the harmful effects of violence. By creating a safe and respectful environment where children can directly experience the alternatives to the violence in their lives, we will be helping them learn about peace and nonviolence in the way they learn best (Levin, 2006). *See also* Computer and Video Game Play in Early Childhood.

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Diane E. Levin

Visual Art. *See* Assessment, Visual Art; Child Art; Curriculum, Visual Art

Visual Impairment

A visual impairment is any degree of vision loss that affects a child's ability to complete age-appropriate tasks and is caused by a visual system that was not formed correctly or is not working properly. Visual impairments include low vision and blindness. Low vision refers to a visual impairment that even with correction affects a child's ability to complete tasks, though the child still has the potential to use their vision. Blindness refers to the absence of usable vision, but the term *blind* is often used nontechnically to refer to severe visual impairments, including low vision.

When a child has a visual impairment, there are three primary ways it manifests: visual acuity problems, visual field defects, and visual processing issues. When a child has a visual acuity problem, the images received by the eyes are not crisp and clear. Children with acuity problems resulting from visual impairments have difficulty seeing images at near, intermediate, and far distances, and they may be

unable to see clear images at any distance. A person with typical sight has a visual field that allows the person to see approximately 180 degrees left to right and 120 degrees top to bottom. A child with a visual field defect may lack peripheral vision (the vision around the edges), central vision, or may have scotomas (blind spots in any part of the visual field). When children have visual processing problems, there is damage to the posterior portion of the optic nerve and/or the visual cortex. The eye sends a clear image to the optic nerve, but the nerve is unable to transmit the image accurately or the brain is unable to interpret the image correctly. Most children with visual impairments experience a combination of at least two of these manifestations: acuity, field, and processing problems.

Many visual impairments can be treated or controlled through medical intervention. For example, antibiotics can prevent onchocerciasis (river blindness), one of the leading causes of blindness worldwide. Other visual impairments, such as glaucoma, are degenerative but can be treated with medication to slow or halt the progression resulting in the maintenance of some usable vision. Many other visual impairments cannot currently be treated or cured through medical interventions. When medical intervention is possible, it is important to seek treatment as early as possible to increase the chance of successful intervention and to decrease the impact of the visual impairment on development.

In first world countries, many children with visual impairments also have additional disabilities. The concurrent nature of these disabilities is due to the advances in medical technology that increases survival rates for children born prematurely and for children with physical and medical disabilities that carry increased risks for developmental delays. When children are born prematurely, they are at risk for developmental delays and for retinopathy of prematurity, a visual impairment that can result in low vision or total blindness. When children experience brain damage from a physical disability or medical problem, they are at risk for cortical visual impairments in which the portions of the brain that interpret visual images are impaired. Advances in medicine allow for many children born prematurely and with medical or physical problems to survive, and often these children have visual impairments as a result of their other conditions. It is estimated that in the United States approximately 40 percent of children with visual impairments have significant additional disabilities. When additional disabilities exist, they add to the potential for delays in development.

Impact of Visual Impairments on Development

Because vision is a unifying sense, a visual impairment, whether low vision or blindness, impacts a child's overall development. When children with visual impairments receive adequate early intervention services, they develop at rates similar to that of their peers with typical sight. Unfortunately, many children with visual impairments do not receive early intervention services and many developmental delays and mannerisms arise. When children are blind, they have difficulty connecting to the world outside their own body, and when children have low vision, they primarily look and interact with what is within arm's reach, severely limiting their opportunities to learn. Children with visual impairments

are at risk for experiencing delays in all areas of development: social-emotional, communication, motor, cognitive, and self-help.

Without intervention, children with visual impairments often develop delays in social-emotional skills, which begin with difficulties bonding with their caregivers owing to lack of eye contact and nonintuitive behaviors. For example, infants who are blind often become still when an adult speaks to them rather than moving their body in excitement as typically sighted children do. This behavior, known as attentive stillness, is an excellent compensatory skill that allows the child to better hear the caregiver, but many caregivers misunderstand the stillness as a sign that the child is uninterested in interacting and stop speaking to the child.

Children with visual impairments often experience differences in their communication development. A child with typical sight is able to learn about a concept (e.g., trucks) by seeing trucks on the street and in books and on TV. Children with visual impairments will learn very little from trucks at a distance or pictures of trucks; they will best learn about trucks by climbing in and on real trucks. Owing to the many visual avenues for learning about trucks, a child with typical sight will likely have opportunities to learn about multiple trucks (pick-up truck, dump truck, fire truck, etc.), while a child with a visual impairment may only be familiar with the pick-up truck driven by the child's family. In addition, many adults engage in atypical communication with children who are blind by labeling everything for them or by asking them many questions. Children imitate what they hear, so many children who are blind ask questions and label objects rather than engaging in meaningful conversations.

Without intervention, children with visual impairments also often experience delays in motor skills. Vision is a strong motivator for children to develop motor skills such as pushing up to see a person or crawling to reach a favorite toy. Children with visual impairments need encouragement and opportunities to explore and develop motor skills that are often delayed without the benefit of typical visual motivators.

Children with visual impairments who have no other disabilities have the cognitive potential of typically sighted children, but their environments often put them at a disadvantage resulting in cognitive delays. All children develop cognitive skills (e.g., object permanence) and concepts (e.g., what is a dog) through experiences and interactions with people and objects in their environments. As discussed above, visual impairments may limit interactions with people, can result in atypical communication patterns, and can inhibit motor exploration. When children with visual impairments have such limited experiences, they have few opportunities to develop cognitive skills and concepts, often resulting in developmental delays.

Many adults feel sorry for children with visual impairments and want to help and protect them. Although all children need protection and help, they also need to learn to care for themselves. Children with visual impairments are unable to observe others taking care of self-help skills such as dressing/undressing, food preparation, eating/drinking, bathing, housecleaning, etc. When children with visual impairments are not actively involved in doing these tasks, they cannot learn how to care for themselves. From a very early age, children with visual

impairments should be involved in daily living tasks through partial participation just as their typically sighted peers are.

Interventions

With adequate **early intervention** and **early childhood special education** services, children with visual impairments can develop into healthy, intelligent children and adults who are able to make meaningful contributions to their communities. It is vital that children with visual impairment and their families receive services and supports to encourage appropriate development. Owing to the wide range of visual functioning in children with visual impairments, interventions must be tailored to meet the unique needs of each child; what is appropriate to assist one child with a visual impairment may be detrimental for another. For example, most children with low vision benefit from increased lighting, but some types of visual impairments result in sensitivity to light. Children with these impairments see best with dimmer lighting. Early interventionists and early childhood educators who work with children with visual impairments should be knowledgeable about visual impairments, the impact of visual impairments on development, and interventions appropriate for the child's specific visual impairment. Interventionists and educators must be able to share information with families and assist families in finding culturally appropriate ways of meeting their child's needs. They must also be able to provide direct intervention services to children as needed to teach them disability-specific skills such as braille and orientation and mobility (i.e., moving safely and independently without the use of vision) when appropriate. Educators who specialize in visual impairments and early childhood education are most qualified to meet the needs of children with visual impairments and their families. With appropriate intervention, children with visual impairments can develop and learn at similar rates to children with typical sight.

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Wendy Sapp

Vocabulary Development. See Read-Alouds and Vocabulary Development

Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich (1896–1934)

Lev Vygotsky is often called the “Mozart of psychology” because, similar to the famous composer, Vygotsky applied his genius early in life and to many different areas. Like Mozart, Vygotsky died young, losing his battle with tuberculosis at the age of 37. Born in 1896 in what was then a part of the Russian empire and is now the Republic of Belarus, Vygotsky had to overcome multiple obstacles during his remarkable life. As a Jew, his admittance to Moscow University depended on his

winning a special lottery in spite of having graduated high school with honors. He was also limited in the type of career that would allow him to live outside the Pale, which accounts for his choice to pursue a degree in medicine, switching to law during his freshman year. While attending law classes, Vygotsky did not give up his studies in humanities and he simultaneously enrolled in Shanyavsky University to take classes in philosophy, literature, and linguistics.

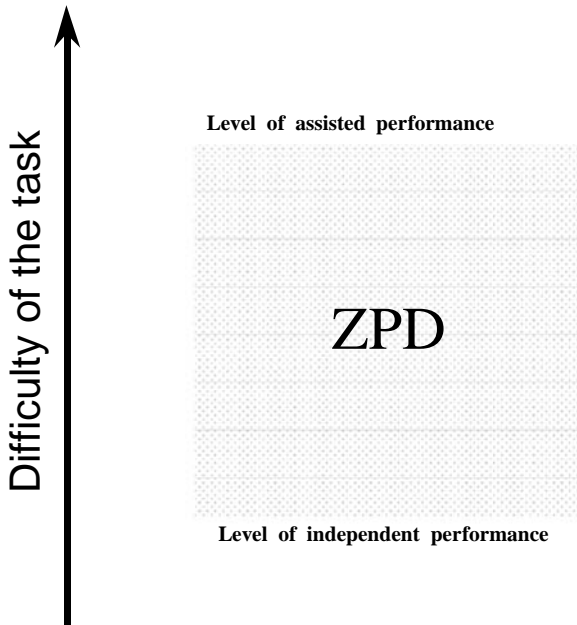
After graduating from both Universities, Vygotsky returned to his native Gomel, where he taught literature, language, and psychology to schoolchildren, night school students, and to teachers in pre-service and in-service programs. During this period, Vygotsky developed many innovative ideas that later formed the foundation of his Cultural Historical Approach. In 1924, Vygotsky presented some of these ideas at the All-Russian Congress on Study of Behavior in St. Petersburg. His presentation made such an impression that, although he was an unknown instructor from a small provincial city, he was given a prestigious research position in the Moscow Psychological Institute.

After moving to Moscow in 1924, Vygotsky set forth to create what he hoped would become a new theory for understanding and solving the social and educational problems of his time. In addition to his theoretical work, Vygotsky pioneered new practical applications of his ideas such as “defectology”—a discipline that combined child abnormal psychology and special education. As the head of an experimental laboratory that later became the Institute of Defectology, Vygotsky advocated a new approach to educating children with special needs that focused on helping them acquire special cultural tools that would allow them to fully integrate into the society. Working feverishly as if in a race with his debilitating disease, Vygotsky immersed himself in research, writing, and teaching in child development, educational and clinical psychology, special education, and psychology of art. At the same time, he was expanding the circle of his colleagues and students, which later became the “Vygotsky School.” Vygotsky’s hopes for the creation of new theory, however, were not fully realized either during his lifetime or even during the lifetime of most of his closest colleagues and students. When the academic openness of the first postrevolutionary years ended, Vygotsky’s ideas and the educational practices he initiated were suppressed by the communist government. These ideas and practices reemerged in the 1960s and 1970s, kept alive by Vygotsky’s students, who were not only able to preserve the scientific legacy of their leader and mentor, but to enrich the Vygotskian approach to education and to broaden its practical applications.

At the core of Vygotsky’s Cultural-Historical Theory is Vygotsky’s belief that human development—an individual child’s development as well as the development of all of humankind—is shaped by one’s acquisition of cultural tools (written languages, number systems, various signs, and symbols) through the process of social interactions. These cultural tools not only make it possible for children to grow into the culture they are being raised in but they also transform the very way the child’s mind is being formed, leading to the emergence of higher mental functions—intentional, self-regulated, and sign-mediated mental behaviors. An important characteristic of higher mental functions is their gradual transformation from external and socially distributed (intersubjective) to internal and individual

(intrasubjective) through the process of internalization. For Vygotsky, interactions and cooperation with others is more than a favorable condition of child development—it is one of its driving forces.

Vygotsky's views on the development of higher mental functions can be illustrated by his model of the development of private or self-directed speech. Vygotsky saw private speech as a transitional step from social speech directed to other people to inner speech and eventually to verbal thinking. Noticing that children tend to increase the amount of self-talk when facing more challenging tasks, Vygotsky hypothesized that at some point, they start using private speech to organize (plan, direct, or evaluate) their actions, thus transforming spontaneous and unintentional behaviors into thoughtful and intentional ones. This function of private speech makes it an indicator of children's growing mastery of their behaviors, which contrasts with its explanation by Jean Piaget, who considered self-talk a manifestation of young children's egocentric, hence immature, thinking.



Vygotsky's position on the relationship between education, learning, and development is an extension of his view of child development as a complex interplay of natural and cultural processes. Seeing instruction (both formal and informal) as one of the important sources of child development, Vygotsky disagreed with theorists who believed that child development occurs spontaneously, is driven by the processes of maturation, and cannot be affected by education. He also rejected the view that instruction could alter development at any time regardless of a child's age or capacities. Instead, he proposed a more complex and dynamic relationship between learning and development represented by the concept of

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the area between a child's level of independent performance (what he/she can do alone) and this child's level of assisted performance (what he/she can do with support). Skills and understandings contained within a child's ZPD are the ones that have not emerged yet and could emerge only if the child engages in interactions with knowledgeable others (peers and adults) or in other supportive contexts (such as make-believe **play** for preschool children). According to Vygotsky, the most effective instruction is the kind that is aimed not at child's level of independent performance but is instead aimed at this child's ZPD. This instruction does more than increase the repertoire of skills and understandings; it actually produces gains in child development. In Vygotsky's words, "instruction leads development instead of lagging behind it." Vygotsky's legacy can be found in contemporary interpretations of social **constructivism** and sociocultural theory.

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Elena Bodrova and Deborah Leong

W

Waldorf Education

Waldorf education is one of the largest international independent school movements in the world and is based on the work of Austrian scientist, philosopher, and researcher Rudolf **Steiner**. In 1919, as Germany faced the task of rebuilding its economic, political, and social systems, Steiner was asked to create a school for children of the workers at the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory. He envisioned a school based on an integrated view of human development and curriculum. Steiner framed three stages of development on the way to adulthood: early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. Each stage of development was to be met with an integrated curriculum that allows for the nurturing of new capacities.

Rudolf Steiner proposed that teaching must be viewed as an art rather than a science, and thus the teacher needs a wide array of artistic abilities from which to draw. The teacher must become a master of pedagogy, artistic skills and developmental knowledge. There are training centers within the United States and in many other countries. The training is rooted in Anthroposophy, a comprehensive view of the human being as a spiritual as well as a physical being. This plays out in the classroom through activities that appeal to the head (thinking), heart (feeling), and feet (willing). Lessons and activities are composed so as to allow all three components of the young child to be active. Each stage of development offers an opportunity for one or another of these components to be predominant. In early childhood it is the will that is the initial focus, in middle childhood it is the heart, and during adolescence teachers appeal to the thinking of their students. This is not to say that in each stage the others are ignored, but rather that each stage has its own point of engagement.

Contemporary interpretations of a Waldorf education adhere to most of these early principles. Waldorf educators generally receive intensive training in Waldorf pedagogy as well as in child development, painting, music, handwork, and movement. In the Waldorf kindergarten and preschool, the teacher is a specialist in early childhood education. It is through the will, through activity and imitation,

that the child is educated at this age. The Waldorf kindergarten is a carefully constructed environment where children play creatively, in surroundings filled with objects from nature and toys that encourage imagination and fantasy. For example, natural construction materials such as wood and stone are preferred over commercially produced building blocks. Children are taught to use natural dyes for the creation of fabrics that are then used to make costumes for their imaginative play. Often these kindergartens are composed of children of mixed ages, ranging from three-and-a-half to five years old. Thus some children may be a part of one class for more than one year.

Rhythm is an essential component of the kindergarten classroom in a Waldorf school. The day is structured in such a way that children have the opportunity to engage in expansive, energetic activities like free play followed by more concentrated activities like morning circle, where songs, poems, circle games, and stories are shared. Alternating active and receptive activities allows the children to engage in tasks with greater attention. Children internalize this daily rhythm and develop a sense of certainty and freedom as they move within the structure of the day in the kindergarten.

Just as the day has a rhythm that helps the children to feel secure as they move through their daily activities, the Waldorf kindergarten also establishes a weekly rhythm. Each day of the week will be marked by a focal activity such as baking, painting, movement, cooking, or modeling. Seasonal festivals that help instill in the children a sense of participation in the workings of the natural world mark the rhythms of the year. Upon entering a Waldorf kindergarten, one is quickly struck by the materials that are provided for the children's play and exploration. Cotton, silk, wool, beeswax, wood, and acorns are found displayed in inviting ways. Most of the materials come from natural sources. Toys are often very simple, suggestive ones, allowing the children to play creatively with them. There may be a large basket of small pieces of branches from a birch tree, for example. These may be used by the children as building blocks or for any number of imaginative uses. Often there will be cloaks, crowns, sashes or simply a basket of cloths that can be used by the children as they enter into imaginative play.

Play is a fundamental activity in a Waldorf kindergarten. It is through play that the children learn about themselves, each other, and the world that they live in. Teachers attempt to create an environment and activities that provide inspiration for the children's play. Stories, puppet shows, and carefully created toys allow the children to fully live into their play.

As movements toward academic standards continue to press children to learn reading and writing at ever-earlier ages, Waldorf kindergartens resist this direction. Feeling that the academic work is more appropriate for middle childhood, these kindergartens focus on developing other foundational skills for school and lifelong success. Although many of the activities may be viewed as part of a pre-reading curriculum, the Waldorf kindergartens prefer to frame such activities as storytelling, dramatics, and poetry as ways for children to learn about their own inner and outer worlds.

Recognizing that imitation is a fundamental way that young children learn about the world around them, the Waldorf kindergarten teacher attempts to fill the day with a conscious use of physical gesture. Poems are recited using the

body expressively. Movement games also allow for simple gestures that allow the children to be fully active. The new developments in the neurosciences have demonstrated a connection between movement, memory, and the continuing growth of the neural pathways in the brain. Waldorf kindergartens have based their approach on this premise for the better part of a century.

As children progress into the early grades, they leave the kindergarten teacher behind and forge a new bond with a Waldorf elementary school teacher who, ideally, will be their teacher for the next eight years. This “class teacher” will need to grow along with the children, as he/she will teach all of the academic subjects throughout the eight years of elementary school. Special subject teachers teaching handwork, music, movement, and foreign languages may also work with the class primarily in the afternoons. The mornings are reserved for academic work.

In the Waldorf elementary grades (grades 1 through 8), academic subjects are taught in what is called a “main lesson.” This lesson lasts for two hours or more every morning. During the lesson there will be a variety of activities (e.g., recitation, movement, story, an artistic rendering of the lesson), but the focus is on one subject at a time. There may be a four-week-long “block” of math followed by a six-week block of history, for example.

In first grade, the children slowly learn their letters. They are presented through stories, poetry, and song. Many children may have already learned the letter names, but they are reintroduced in such a way as to connect them with pictures and stories that will bring them to life. The teacher may prepare the room with an elaborate chalk drawing of a bear, for example, and tell the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Over the course of the next day or two the bear may slowly be transformed into the letter “B” by way of drawing. The children may use their bodies to make the letter, walk the form of the letter, draw or paint the letter with vivid colors, learn rhymes that reinforce the qualities of the letter, etc.

A quality that is consistent throughout the early years of a Waldorf education is that of “wonder.” Throughout kindergarten and the elementary grades an attempt is made at each step to imbue the children with a sense of wonder as they learn about the natural world, the social world, and the world of academics. Subjects are presented in such a way that the child’s imagination and body are engaged in the learning. The world is presented as a beautiful place and it is unfolded before them like a vast mystery.

Today there are more than 800 Waldorf schools worldwide, with more than 150 in the United States. The movement has a central organization known as the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America (AWSNA), but each school retains its independent identity. In addition, the kindergartens are served by the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN), which provides a central source for continuing training and resources for early childhood educators.

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War Play

“War play,” play with violent content and themes, is a form of play that has seemingly engaged children for centuries and across many cultures. Artifacts of what look like war toys have been found from ancient Egypt and the Middle Ages. It has always been a controversial form of play, with some adults seeing it as part of the normal repertoire of content children (especially boys) bring into their play and others arguing that merely letting children play this way can teach them harmful lessons about violence. But during some periods in history the differing points of view have led to more controversy than other periods. For instance, during the Viet Nam War in the United States, many parents and teachers who opposed the war worked hard to limit children’s involvement in this type of play. Theories of child development also provide different perspectives on the meanings and consequences of this type of play on children’s development.

Finding Value in War Play

Beginning with Anna Freud in England during World War II, researchers have identified a number of developmental issues that may be addressed through war play. Some argue that war play, perhaps more than any other form of dramatic play, can help children feel powerful as they play (Freud and Burlingham, 1943; Jones, 2002). Children can experience a sense of competence. As they pretend to be strong characters and superheroes with super powers, for instance, their self-images as strong people who can take care of themselves may be enhanced. This can help them with separation from home as well. As they assume the role of powerful characters and “pretend to fight,” they can learn to gain control over their impulses to stay within acceptable boundaries. War play also can be a special vehicle for learning about the difference between fantasy and reality. And as children take on contrasting roles (e.g., “good guy” and “bad guy”), they learn about how their actions affect one another and begin to understand other points of view. Finally, war play can help children make sense of the violence they see and hear about in the world around them—in their homes and communities and in the media. A child who sees soldiers fighting on television news might bring this image into “war play” in an effort to understand it or make it less frightening (Levin and Carlsson-Paige, 2006; Jones, 2002).

A new phase in war play history began in 1984 when the United States Federal Communications Commission deregulated children’s television. Deregulation opened the floodgates for marketing TV-linked toys and products to children, a practice previously prohibited. An abundance of shows, products, and toys linked together around a single theme, usually a violent one, began to saturate the childhood culture. Both the quantity and quality of entertainment violence children saw increased dramatically. And increasingly over the years, videos, video games, movies, and fast-food outlets have joined in these marketing campaigns.

Adults in the United States began to see children’s war play begin to change during this same period in the mid-1980s, soon after television was deregulated. Teachers, especially, voiced concerns about the war play they were seeing in early childhood and elementary settings. They described how children were

imitating TV “scripts” in their war play and acting out the violence they had seen on television and movie screens instead of inventing and evolving their own stories.

I visited a kindergarten classroom recently at recess time. The teacher came up to me (Carlsson-Paige) and the first thing she said was, “I hate *Star Wars*. It has taken over the classroom. It’s all the kids can think about—they’re obsessed with it, mostly the boys. They turn everything into a light saber and start fighting. But they’re clever and tell me it’s something else, not a weapon. It’s all they talk about and all they play.”

Later, I went into the classroom and sat at a table with three boys. They were drawing and talking about *Star Wars*. One of them said, “I love *Star Wars*!” He pointed to his head and he said, “I can never stop thinking about it!”

Children’s war play began to look more like what Jean Piaget (1951/1945) called *imitation* than play. Many children seemed unable to use their war play as a means of actively transforming their own experience, especially the violence they had seen, and thus meeting their developmental needs. The deep meanings that young children construct when their play flows from their own needs and experience were being replaced at least in part by content seen on the screen. And this undermining of creative play continues to be of serious concern to parents and early childhood professionals today, especially in relation to war play.

In Great Britain, similar concerns began to be voiced when violent TV programs and toys from the United States started to arrive in 1986. By the early nineties, at a time when the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles program was being aired in over 100 countries, concerns about media-linked war play and toys were raised in such other industrialized countries as Canada, Germany, Greece, and New Zealand.

Finding an Approach to War Play Today

In a society where children are exposed to large amounts of pretend and real violence, it is not easy to find an effective approach to war play in the classroom. There are no simple or perfect solutions for approaching children’s war play that fully address both the needs of children and the concerns of adults. Teachers who ban, allow, or facilitate children’s war play can all find difficulties with the approach they have chosen.

Banning war play altogether can alleviate many problems for teachers but it also denies children the opportunity to work on the violence they have been exposed to through their play. It can leave children to work out these issues on their own without adult guidance; they can learn lessons that glorify violence that are unmediated by adults. They are also left to feel guilty about their interest in the play. And even when teachers try to ban war play, many say that this approach does not work very well. Children have a hard time accepting limits or controlling their intense need to engage in this kind of play. They find ways to circumvent the ban—by denying the play is really war play (i.e., learning to lie) or sneaking behind the teacher’s back to play (i.e., learning to deceive). So while banning war play can be the approach of choice for teachers, it can have a worrisome negative impact on children.

Some teachers who try to allow war play often find that the play, especially media-driven, imitative war play, is so unproductive and out of control that banning seems to be the only choice, at least for periods of time. When this happens, teachers can still provide alternative activities such as drawing, storytelling, writing, and building. This will allow children to work out their ideas about violence and war play-related themes and connect with adults about their needs regarding them. And at the same time, teachers can provide alternative themes to those offered by media that address the same developmental needs that are met in war play. They can encourage dramatic play based on children's books, for example, that touch the deep developmental themes such as mastery, power, and separation that are expressed in war play.

Teachers who decide that they want to allow children's war play almost all find that, in order for children to use their play to meet their needs in a meaningful way in this play, they require direct help from adults (Hoffman, 2004; Katch, 2001). How teachers decide to help will depend on the *quality* of the play children are engaged in. Taking time to watch the play and learn what children are working on and how they are working on it can give teachers the information they need to facilitate war play in ways that will help children get beyond narrowly scripted play that is focused on violent actions. Often children will need help reducing their dependence on highly realistic, media-linked "fighting" toys and learning how to use open-ended toys. Some children will need help bringing new and interesting content into their play that expands the focus of the play beyond violent themes and actions. And many children will need help keeping the play safe and from getting out of control. Teachers can work with children to develop rules for this play that ensure the safety of all of the children in the classroom. Facilitating war play in these ways can provide children with skills to work out the violent content they bring to their play, work on important developmental issues, learn valuable lessons, and move on to new issues rather than stay obsessed with their war play.

Whether teachers partially ban war play or actively facilitate it, talking with children about their war play and the related themes in their drawings, stories or buildings is one of the most important ways adults can help them work out the violence children see and even learn alternatives to that violence. It often helps to begin with an open-ended question. If a child draws what looks like a bomb or an explosion, a teacher can point to it and ask, "Can you tell me about this part of your picture?" Then the teacher can respond based on what is learned about that particular child's ideas, questions, and needs. In all of these instances, it is essential that teachers keep in mind that children do not understand violence as adults do. They may need help clearing up confusions ("The planes that go over our school do not carry bombs"), sorting out fantasy and reality ("In real life people don't carry light sabers"), and getting reassurance about their safety ("I can't let you play like that because it's my job to make sure everyone is safe").

Reducing children's exposure to violence, to inappropriate media, to excessive time-consuming media, and to media-linked war toys is one of the most important ways teachers can foster healthy war play. The less violent content children have, the less violence they will need to try to work out in their play. Through parent workshops and family newsletters that include resource materials, teachers can

help families learn more about how to protect children from exposure to violent entertainment and news media and too much time in front of the screen.

At the same time, while parents and educators can do a lot to reduce the violence to which children are exposed, some violence will continue to get in—and it is the job of adults to help children make sense of what they see. It is by connecting with children in their play and in their drawings—as described earlier when the adult begins a conversation with a child about her drawing—that we can convey to children that adults are there to help them deal with the violence they see. For as children grow up in the violent world of today, they need help to work out what they hear, clear up misconceptions and reassure them of their safety to the extent that we can, and provide lessons that teach alternatives to violence (Levin, 1998).

Teachers can reach out to community after-school programs and family day care providers to share materials on creating safer, more violence-free, less media-saturated situations for children. Working to minimize the influence of violent entertainment culture on children will help them restore their war play to its rightful place as a valuable resource for making sense of the violence they see in the world around and working on important developmental issues.

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Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane E. Levin

Watson, John B. (1878–1958)

John Broadus Watson, an American psychologist, developed a new branch of psychology that he termed “**behaviorism.**” Drawing on the work of Ivan **Pavlov**, Watson provided experimental evidence that human behavior, although far more complicated than that of other animals, was influenced by the same principles, specifically, learning through association. Watson’s behaviorism was the dominant psychological viewpoint in the United States between 1920 and 1930. His work is known to have significantly influenced that of B.F. Skinner.

John Watson was born in Travelers Rest, South Carolina, on January 9, 1878, and he spent his childhood years on a farm. He entered Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina in 1894 at age sixteen. After five years of study, he was awarded a master’s degree, and then continued on to the University of Chicago to undertake doctoral study in philosophy and psychology. He subsequently dropped philosophy and in 1903, was awarded a PhD in psychology. In

1908, Watson joined the faculty at Johns Hopkins University in experimental and comparative psychology, where he remained until 1920.

Watson's ideas, first presented between 1908 and 1912, challenged the existing views of psychology, particularly those held by Sigmund Freud. Watson questioned the relevance of heredity and internal mental states to behavior, and promoted the concept that behaviorism as a branch of psychology was an objective and rigorous scientific study of human behavior, the goal of which was to predict and mold such behavior. His article "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It," published in 1913 in *Psychological Review*, is generally considered the seminal statement of his new branch of psychology, behaviorism.

In his research, Watson's comparisons between animal behavior and human behavior initially were based on observations of human infants. However, after his service as a psychologist in World War I, he began conducting experiments. His most significant experiment and the one for which he is best known was conducted in the winter of 1919 and 1920 and involved Albert B. Watson, or Baby Albert, a young infant, and a small white lab rat. The experimenters first established that Baby Albert was not afraid of the lab rat (he had shown an interest in it and reached out to touch it) but was afraid when the experimenters clanged metal with a hammer right behind his head (he cried). Then when Baby Albert was around 11 months old, the experimenters again presented him with the lab rat, but as soon as he touched it, they clanged the metal with the hammer right behind his head, making him cry. They repeated this for several weeks. As a result, Baby Albert cried and tried to crawl away at the mere sight of the lab rat, and in fact showed fear and cried at the sight of anything furry.

This experiment demonstrated that humans (as well as other animals such as dogs) can be conditioned through association of stimuli, a phenomenon called "classical conditioning." This experiment also demonstrated the need for ethical standards in research with humans, especially with infants. Such standards did not exist during Watson's time. In fact, even after the experiment was completed, no attempt was made to "decondition" Baby Albert.

During his illustrious academic career, Watson founded the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, edited the *Psychological Review*, and served as president of the American Psychological Association. However, in 1920, Johns Hopkins University asked Watson to resign amidst personal turmoil. He did so and later entered the field of advertising. He died in 1958.

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Stephanie F. Leeds

Wheelock, Lucy (1857–1946)

Lucy Wheelock was a pioneer in the kindergarten and Sunday school movements in the United States, as well as founder of Wheelock College in Boston,

Massachusetts. A disciple of Friedrich **Froebel**, she was mentored by Elizabeth **Peabody**, founder of many of the first English-speaking kindergartens. When the city of Boston added kindergartens to its public schools, Wheelock was asked to provide the training program for the new teachers. This program, originally named Miss Wheelock's Kindergarten Training School, ultimately became Wheelock College and was directed by Wheelock for fifty years.

While she helped make Froebel's ideas popular in the early childhood community, she was also willing to modify his approach to suit a new time and setting. In 1885 she began a four-year term as president of the **International Kindergarten Union (IKU)**, and for that group chaired the Committee of Nineteen. This committee was charged with investigating kindergarten methodology and moderating differences between the orthodox Froebelians such as Susan **Blow** and the progressives such as Patty Smith **Hill**. In 1913, Wheelock authored the committee's report, *The Kindergarten*; however, her committee was not able to unite the two wings of the kindergarten movement.

During her career she led delegations of educators to original Froebel schools in Germany. As the daughter of a congregational minister, she was also active in the Sunday school movement, and applied Froebelian techniques to the religious education of young children. She edited *The Child's Hour*, a Sunday school journal in Boston, and conducted training programs for Sunday school teachers nationwide. One of her most quoted sayings, "Great oaks grow from little acorns" ("Wheelock College Beginnings," np), summarizes her vision of quality early childhood education.

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Mary Ruth Moore

White, Edna Noble (1879–1954)

Edna Noble White was one of a number of nineteenth-century American women who led in developing helping professions in health and nutrition, education, including early childhood; social work; psychology, and home economics. White, an Illinois-born graduate of the University of Illinois, left a legacy for today's early childhood professionals.

After teaching high school for a short time, White became professor and department chair for home economics at Ohio State University. In 1919, Lizzie Merrill Palmer, a wealthy widow, invited her to become the founding director of the Merrill-Palmer School in Detroit, Michigan. Later it became the Merrill-Palmer Institute and today is a department of Wayne State University. The original purpose of the school was "to train young women in homemaking and motherhood."

At a time in American history when some women seemingly defied the female norm of marriage and motherhood by attending universities and building

emerging fields of study, White exemplified the group by transforming family education and child development activities into research opportunities. She brought a diversified faculty to Merrill-Palmer to address the interrelated subjects involved.

When White became interested in preschool education in the 1920s, she traveled to England to study with Rachel and Margaret **McMillan**, pioneers in the British innovation of nursery school. While the McMillan sisters emphasized programs for low-income, at-risk children, White's American ideals recognized nursery education's values for all children and promoted the positive impact that early education could have on society.

Merrill-Palmer under White's leadership became prominent among academically related early childhood institutions. In 1927, White was named to the board of directors of the original National Committee on Nursery Schools established by Patty Smith **Hill**. The Committee evolved into the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) and, in 1964, became today's **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC).

White's legacy strengthened the concept of the "whole child," whose learning was to be comprehensive and include physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects. She implemented this belief by bringing together a multidisciplinary faculty at Merrill-Palmer. She recognized that children are not only individuals, but are also ecological beings living in families and communities. In addition, all children would benefit from early education programs, regardless of socioeconomic status and physical or mental abilities. An early proponent of education across the lifespan, White also promoted educational experiences for infants and older children. After retiring, White established a geriatric organization in Detroit, as well as helping to establish the Visiting Housekeepers and youth programs.

To round out a cross-sectional career dedicated to children, families, and communities, Edna Noble White maintained a life-long effort to influence public policies for children. She advised President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the Great Depression, and served the same role with the Rockefeller Institute.

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Edna Ranck

Whiting, Beatrice (1914–2004)

Beatrice Blyth Whiting influenced the social scientific study of culture, child development, and the socialization process. Through her lifelong commitment to comparative studies of children, families, and communities throughout the world,

she taught and influenced several generations of anthropologists, child development researchers, and educators. She pioneered the use of comparative ethnographic and quantitative methods that integrated the anthropologist's knowledge of local communities and families with the psychologist's systematic assessments of child behavior and development (Weisner and Edwards, 2002). Her research projects modeled the strength of interdisciplinary, international teams and led to a deeper infusion of cultural understanding into contemporary studies of child development and education.

Whiting graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 1935 and was one of the first women to study anthropology at Yale University, where she received her PhD in 1943. She joined Harvard University as a research associate in 1952, and in 1970 became one of the first women to receive tenure there. With her husband, John W.M. Whiting, she directed three major international comparative studies of human development: The Six Culture Study of the Socialization of the Child (Whiting, 1963; Whiting and Whiting, 1975); the Child Development Research Project at the University of Nairobi (Whiting and Edwards, 1988; Edwards and Whiting, 2004); and the Harvard Comparative Adolescence Project (Whiting and Whiting, 1991).

Whiting's work helped establish the use of intensive, observational studies to investigate the dimensions of children's cultural learning environments. Whiting concluded that the drama of child development necessarily takes place on a stage surrounded by a theater, the cultural community, with characteristic geography, settlement pattern, household living arrangements, and age and gender division of labor and economic routines. The drama on the stage (shaped by those outside forces) involves scenes and characters provided by the child's typical caregivers and social companions, family work responsibilities, and access to the wider community. Together, all these cultural dimensions comprise the cultural learning environment and predict age and gender variations in child social behavior and interaction as the drama unfolds. For example, children who contribute more actively to family subsistence and survival (through child care, food preparation, gardening, and herding) demonstrate significantly more nurturant and prosocial behavior and less dependency. Children in school (and preschool) have more frequent opportunity to interact with large groups of same-age, same-sex peers, where they are relatively competitive, egoistically dominant, and rough-and-tumble (or sociably aggressive) in their play, suggesting that the introduction of age-graded schools (and preschools) historically leads to far-reaching changes in children's normative social behavior (Whiting and Edwards, 1988).

Whiting, a pioneering woman herself, was as concerned with the role of women and families in the transformation of culture as with the socialization of children. Her final publication on the Kenyan village of Ngecha, during the years 1968 to 1973, documented how rural women coped and adapted, while taking into account the needs of their husbands, numerous children, aging parents, and others for whom they were responsible (Edwards and Whiting, 2004). To prepare their children for wage-earning jobs requiring schooling, the mothers modified their parenting goals and behavior and took upon themselves increased workloads and reduced kin support. The children, in turn, experienced evolving educational practices and individualistic achievement expectations that challenged traditional

family-based morals and obligations. Whiting's work has made major contributions to the field of early childhood education by illustrating the variety of ways in which child development can be supported in diverse cultural and ecological contexts.

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Carolyn Pope Edwards

Whiting, John W. M. (1908-1999)

John Wesley Mayhew Whiting, a founder of contemporary psychological anthropology, was a major figure in the field of child development. He was born in Chilmark, Massachusetts, on Martha's Vineyard, where he died one month before his 91st birthday. John Whiting was the revered teacher of many anthropologists for more than thirty years and was unique in his level of engagement in both psychology and anthropology. Inspired by the early work of Margaret Mead, and with his wife of sixty years and research collaborator, Beatrice B. Whiting, he built and maintained the comparative study of child rearing and development during the second half of the twentieth century.

John Whiting grew up on a farm on Martha's Vineyard. He attended Phillips Academy, Andover; and Yale University, graduating in 1931. He then joined the anthropology graduate program at Yale, where he worked with George Peter Murdock, Edward Sapir, and John Dollard. He earned his PhD in 1938, returning to Yale as a postdoctoral fellow in the Yale Institute of Human Relations. He turned his dissertation into a monograph, *Becoming a Kwoma* (1941), in which he used learning theory as well as functional anthropology to interpret childhood in New Guinea.

After joining the U.S. Navy during World War II, Whiting returned to the research staff at Yale, where he stayed until 1947, leaving to join Robert R. Sears at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, only to leave two years later with Sears to found the Laboratory of Human Development at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Whiting became Director of the lab in 1953 and remained on the Harvard faculty until his retirement in 1978.

Whiting's first major contribution to the field of cross-cultural studies in child development was with Irvin Child, published in 1953 in *Child Training and Personality*. Subsequently, Whiting organized and supervised field studies of children, adolescents, and parents for the rest of his career. One such study was part of the Harvard Values Study, conducted during the early 1950s with fieldwork in New Mexico. In 1954, together with Irvin Child at Yale and William Lambert

at Cornell, Whiting secured funding from the Ford Foundation for a study of socialization in five societies—Mexico, India, Okinawa, the Philippines, and New England. An African community was later added. Beatrice Whiting coordinated the field studies, the data analyses, and the publications on what became known as the Six Cultures Study. This study has been recognized as a classic in early childhood education for its portrayal of cultural variations in child rearing and child development.

The Whitings always took an anthropological perspective on childhood, but their research and their writings were often addressed to developmental psychology and child psychiatry, challenging the ethnocentrism in those fields. Their aim was to provide the empirical evidence, quantitative as well as qualitative, on cultural variations to replace presumptions and prejudices about human nature and its development. These works were also important to anthropology in arguing and illustrating the impact of culture on parenting and childhood experience.

In John Whiting's view, a central problem in the study of human development was how the child internalizes the values of his cultural environment, and he was particularly concerned with the acquisition of defense mechanisms and with the process of identification through which children acquire gender and other identities. He saw Freudian theory as raising questions that required answers from empirical research in diverse cultures. In his influential studies of male initiation ceremonies, he tried to identify the processes that make the ceremonies psychologically salient for the individuals who undergo them, permitting them to resolve unconscious conflicts created by their early experience. He anticipated the recent emphasis on internalization in the Vygotskian mode in child development and the interest in male and female **gender** identities in anthropology.

John Whiting was recognized, by himself and with his wife, for his scholarly contributions. He received the American Psychological Association's G. Stanley Hall Award for Distinguished Contributions to Developmental Psychology (1973), was elected to the National Academy of Sciences (1979), and, with Beatrice Whiting, received the Distinguished Contribution Award of the American Anthropological Association (1982). He was the first President of the Society for Psychological Anthropology (in 1978). Whiting continued writing scholarly studies into his late eighties and then wrote an article for a county historical journal about the pond on Martha's Vineyard that provided the setting for much of his long life. That was his last publication.

John Whiting dreamt of an international organization of researchers on child rearing and development from all over the world gathering data on their own cultures and exchanging data to achieve a basis for generalizing to all humans. This would not only be of value for anthropology in scientific terms; it would also achieve equality among the participants in the data exchange and an end to the dominance of Westerners in the field. Although this project remained unfinished, John Whiting built a place for the comparative study of child rearing and development in the social sciences and inspired students to conduct theoretically motivated and systematic research on human development in diverse cultures. See also Freud, Sigmund; Vygotsky, Lev.

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Robert A. LeVine

WIC. See Women, Infants and Children

Wiggin, Kate Douglas (1855–1923)

Kate Douglas Wiggin was an educational reformer and novelist, an activist in the nineteenth-century Kindergarten Movement, and the author of the children's classic *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. In 1878, she became the head teacher at the first free kindergarten in San Francisco and in 1879 founded the California Teacher Training School. During the 1880s, Wiggin wrote articles on early childhood curricula and pedagogy, lectured on children's rights and welfare, and published collections of stories, songs, and games for children. In the 1890s she traveled the Chautauqua lecture circuit, participated in the kindergarten demonstrations at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and spoke before the National Education Association. By the turn of the century, she was part of intellectual and social circles that included most of the notable educators, authors, and artists of her day.

Kate Douglas Wiggin, the daughter of Helen Elizabeth Dyer Smith and Robert Noah Smith, was born Katharine D. Smith. She spent her early childhood in Philadelphia, where her father was attempting to establish a career in law. When his efforts proved unsuccessful, and the family returned to their native state of Maine in the late 1850s. Robert deserted the family in 1860. In 1862, Kate's mother married Dr. Albion K.P. Bradbury. During the remainder of her childhood, the Bradburys lived a comfortable life in the village of Hollis, in southern Maine. In 1873 they moved to California. Two years later Albion Bradbury died, leaving the family in debt. Wiggin's career in education began when she decided to enter teaching in order to help support her family.

Wiggin studied kindergarten methods in Los Angeles with Emma Marwedel, a leading disciple of Friedrich Froebel and a protégé of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. When she completed her training in 1878 she became head teacher of the newly founded Silver Street Kindergarten in the impoverished Tar Flats district of San Francisco. To meet the needs of her students, Wiggin extended her activities within the community, offering classes, counseling, and social services to the families of Tar Flats. As a result, Silver Street became an early version of the neighborhood settlement house that was popularized by Jane Addams a decade later. Wiggin's kindergarten training and work at Silver Street connected her to an educational reform network that extended from Elizabeth Peabody's office of *The Kindergarten Messenger* in Boston to the flamboyant Sarah Cooper's International Kindergarten Association in Los Angeles. She became committed to

the cause, taught, lectured, and—unusual for a woman in the 1870s—took part in public debates advocating for child welfare. During the summer months she traveled across the country visiting schools, attending teachers' institutes, and giving demonstration lessons. In 1881, she married Samuel Bradley Wiggin and gave up classroom teaching. However, she continued to give lectures and direct teacher training at Silver Street until 1893.

In the late 1880s the Wiggins moved to New York City and Kate Douglas Wiggin began to write novels depicting the natural wisdom and social plight of children. Her first novel, *The Birds Christmas Carol*, came out in 1888 and was an instant success. Her success was tempered, however, by the sudden unexpected death of Samuel Wiggin in 1889. For the next six years, Wiggin supported herself through writing, lecturing on kindergarten, and giving public readings. During this time, she published a collection of her lectures, *The Rights of Children: A Book of Nursery Logic* (1892), with her sister Nora Archibald Smith as well as two novels that had a significant impact within the national kindergarten network: *Timothy's Quest* (1890), which dealt with the hardships of homeless children, and *The Story of Patsy* (1891), about a child with special needs. By 1894, Wiggin had become a well-known author and was able to purchase a summerhouse in her hometown of Hollis, Maine.

Kate Douglas Wiggin married George Christopher Riggs in 1895 and retired from active involvement in the Kindergarten Movement. However, she retained Wiggin as her professional name and continued her writing career. In 1903, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* made her an international celebrity. In its first three months, *Rebecca* sold 125,000 copies. It became a national bestseller, was adapted for the theater in both New York and London, and was translated into fourteen languages. Until her death in England in 1923, Kate Douglas Wiggin continued to write collections for children, humorous travelogues, and novels and short stories based on her childhood in Maine.

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Susan Douglas Franzosa

Wollstonecraft, Mary (1759–1797)

An early modern philosophical “mother” of English **feminism** and coeducation, Mary Wollstonecraft survived her alcoholic father's **violence** and resisted his opposition to girls' education by educating herself from an early age. She developed her own remarkable way with children, evident throughout her life and written work. Her thought about children's education critically engaged both taken-for-granted popular assumptions about gender and others' writings on education,

extending concern to girls' preparation for moral life, to mothers' preparation for intelligent child-rearing, and to the character of ideal educational partnerships.

As eldest daughter, Wollstonecraft helped her battered mother raise her five younger siblings. A marriage resister among religious Dissenters in the 1780s, she taught young children in a school she established with her two sisters and beloved friend Fanny Blood, and also worked as a governess for Irish aristocrats. Becoming a single mother during the French Revolution, she traveled unescorted with her infant daughter throughout Scandinavia and survived two suicide attempts. Resettling in England, where single mothers and fatherless children were outlaws, she befriended, loved, and married political philosopher William Godwin. He adopted her first daughter, fathered her second daughter (Mary Shelley), and wrote after her death in childbirth, "No one was ever better formed for the business of education."

Wollstonecraft's earliest and latest writings most closely detail the maternal educational practices her husband had witnessed. Her *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) asserted the educational value of the nursery that avoids what she regarded as needless restraint and silly affected speech, provides rationally consistent discipline, exemplifies good manners, and fosters strong morals. Her *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788) presented a conversational, **narrative** approach to children's moral education, selling so well that William Blake illustrated a later edition (1796). Godwin posthumously published her *Lessons* (1798), fragments narrating her affectionate teaching of a toddler daughter—to talk, to befriend animals, to love a newborn brother, to take safety precautions with dangerous household objects. These early and late works also reflect John Locke's emphasis upon "laying the foundation of a good constitution" in young children, but correct his general neglect of girls' education.

Wollstonecraft wanted mothers educated about human anatomy and health care, and counseled them to breast-feed their own children. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1791–1792) reiterated those **child care** concerns while also advocating children's (especially girls') freedom to "run wild" as integral to their education in reason. Explicitly critiquing Jean-Jacques **Rousseau's** *Emile* while commending Catherine Macaulay's *Letters on Education*, this feminist classic also proposed a revolutionary national scheme of coeducational secular day schooling in which girls and boys, both rich and poor, learn to befriend one another from early childhood onward, simultaneously educated in loving homes by parents who are mutual friends. No less than men, argued Wollstonecraft, women might thus develop physical, mental, and moral strength needed to claim eternal life for their God-loving souls, in this life becoming independent, productive citizens and intelligent, virtuous mothers who comprehend their child-rearing duties' patriotic significance for a republic free from slavery and other monarchist tyrannies. See also Gender and Gender Stereotyping in Early Childhood Education; Parents and Parent Involvement.

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Susan Laird

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a federal grant program first established by Congress in 1972. Congress created WIC during the 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health by amending the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, which was part of President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" initiative. WIC is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), a subdivision of the USDA. Grants are awarded to state health agencies or comparable departments in all 50 states, as well as territories and protectorates. The 88 WIC State agencies administer the program through 2,200 local agencies and 9,000 locations. Congress reauthorized it in 2004.

The primary purpose of WIC is to provide nutritious foods and nutritional counseling, plus health and social services referrals to eligible participants, including pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, plus infants and preschool children up to age five who are at nutrition risk. Participants must meet income guidelines (at or below 185% of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines) to be eligible for nutritious food supplements (Food and Nutrition Services, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>).

WIC began as a pilot program in 1972, as a result of the 1969 White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health, and became permanently established in 1974. WIC has improved birth outcomes as well as the health of infants and small children. Mothers' participation in WIC during pregnancy and after birth reduces risk of infant death, lowers the prevalence of small-for-gestational-age deliveries, and decreases low-birth-weight births by up to 25 percent. Participation has grown steadily since the inception of the program. For fiscal year 2005, the average monthly participation was just over eight million people, of which children and infants made up over six million of the participants. WIC is the largest and most successful food supplement program in the United States.

In 2002, almost 47 percent of all infants born in the United States were eligible to receive one or more of the benefits. According to one multisite study in five states and Washington, DC, over a two-year period, about 91 percent of eligible women and children received benefits (Black et al., 2004). Numerous studies have found positive outcomes for WIC participants related to birth, diet, infant-feeding practices, immunization rates, savings on health care costs, cognitive development, birth weights, and improved growth rates for children.

The success of the program and the increasing awareness of the value of early intervention, as well as other challenges that this population faces have led to the expansion of services. Currently, client screening includes dental; lead poisoning; verbal, sexual or physical abuse; immunizations; drug, alcohol, and tobacco use; voter registration; and family reading practices. This merger of health, education,

and social services places the WIC program in a unique and important position in the field of early childhood, promoting the health and nutrition of young children and their mothers.

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John P. Manning

The World Forum on Early Care and Education

The World Forum on Early Care and Education is a biennial conference designed to promote an on-going global exchange of ideas on the delivery of quality services for children in diverse settings. The World Forum has two goals for delegates: first, that they acquire a wealth of new ideas and new perspectives to enrich their work; and second, that they develop meaningful relationships that continue into the future with their peers from other nations. The first five World Forums have attracted an average of 500 delegates from eighty nations. The primary audience of the World Forum is early childhood professionals working in organizations or settings where services are delivered to young children. Early childhood trainers, consultants, advocates, researchers, and public officials also have benefited from attending the World Forum. The World Forum is organized by the World Forum Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation. For details, go to www.worldforumfoundation.org.

Bonnie Neugebauer and Roger Neugebauer

World Health Organisation (WHO)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is the international agency within the United Nations system responsible for health. WHO experts produce health guidelines and standards, and help countries address public health issues. WHO also supports and promotes health research. Through WHO, governments can jointly tackle global health problems and improve people's well-being. WHO's member comprises 192 countries and 2 associate members. They meet every year at the World Health Assembly in Geneva to set policy for the Organisation, approve the Organisation's budget, and every five years, to appoint the Director-General. Their work is supported by the thirty-four-member Executive Board, which is elected by the Health Assembly. Six regional committees focus on health matters of a regional nature. WHO and its Member States work with many partners, including UN agencies, donors, nongovernmental organizations, WHO collaborating centers and the private sector. Only through new ways of working and innovative partnerships can we make a difference and achieve our goals. Last but not least, WHO is people. Almost 8,000 public health experts, including doctors, epidemiologists, scientists, managers, administrators, and other people from all over the world work for WHO in 147 country offices, six regional offices and at the headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

The work of WHO affects the lives of every person on this planet, every day, from the food we eat and the water we drink, to the safety of the medications we take and the prevention and control of the diseases that threaten. No single country can solve the growing list of health challenges the world faces today. Infectious diseases such as SARS can circle the globe within weeks, moving at the speed of air travel. Health crises in distant countries become everyone's concern as they contribute to poverty and conflict. At the same time, globalization is contributing to the huge gaps between people who have access to health care, and those who don't. All countries must work together if we are to find solutions to these challenges. This is where WHO comes in.

WHO Priorities

Ensuring global health. One priority is to help ensure global health security by detecting emerging threats to health and managing them quickly. This is done by building a global network that helps to find a disease outbreak wherever it strikes, and rallying top experts to stop it fast. This is crucial in times of peace, and when people's lives are thrown into the turmoil of conflict or natural disaster. People in more than forty countries are currently experiencing emergencies as a result of natural disasters, economic crises, or conflict—whether they are highly publicized, such as the Tsunami in South Asia, or hidden and forgotten, such as the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. WHO works in countries to help national authorities and communities to prepare by strengthening overall capacity to manage all types of crises; to respond by ensuring effective and timely action to address public health priorities; to recover by ensuring that local health systems are functioning; and to mitigate against the effects of crises on public health.

Reducing tobacco use and promoting healthy diet. Another priority is to reduce tobacco use and promote healthy diets and physical activity to speed up progress in the battle against chronic diseases such as cancer, stroke, heart disease and diabetes. Chronic disease cuts lives short, takes mothers and fathers away from their children, and costs economies billions of dollars. The good news is that people can largely prevent and control chronic disease by reducing three risks. WHO—together with countries, the private sector, civil society and others—is working on several key initiatives to stop the growing chronic disease epidemic.

Achieving millennium goals. A third priority is to build up efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through programs to support countries in the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria; to improve the health and nutrition of children and women; and to increase people's access to essential medicines. WHO works with countries to dramatically reduce the appalling rates of maternal and child deaths with technical advice and policy support. WHO is working to achieve global water and sanitation targets to ensure environmental sustainability, which is essential for improving people's health. By developing a global partnership, WHO is working to ensure people have universal access to life-saving drugs including anti-retroviral therapy. Eradicating extreme poverty means addressing diseases that cripple workers, ravage families, and kill children before they can contribute to a better future.

Improving access to better health care. Finally, WHO strives for improvements in health care and fairer access in a world where life expectancy ranges from eighty-five years in Japan to just thirty-six years in Sierra Leone. Wherever they live, people need health services. In many countries, there is little money available to spend on health. This results in inadequate hospitals and clinics, a short supply of essential medicines and equipment, and a critical shortage of health workers. Worse, in some parts of the world, large numbers of health workers are dying from the very diseases that they are trying to prevent and treat. WHO works with countries to help them plan, educate and manage the health workforce, for example, by advising on policies to recruit and retain people working in health.

Throughout the world, poor and vulnerable people have less access to health care, and get sicker and die earlier than people who are more privileged. To address these concerns, WHO set up the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, which brings together leading thinkers on health care and social policy. Their aim is to analyze the social causes of ill health—such as poverty, social exclusion, poor housing and health systems—and actively promote new policies to address them.

WHO's Constitution states that the "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being." The Organisation is working to make this human right a reality, and to make people everywhere healthier.

For further information, please contact the following: Meena Cabral de Mello, Senior Scientist, Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development

(CAH), World Health Organisation, 20 Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, tel +41-22 791 3616 or +41-22 791 3281, fax +41-22 791 4853, emails: cabraldemellomho.int; cah@who.int. *Web site:* <http://www.who.int/about/en>

See also United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Meena Cabral de Mello

World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)

The World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP) (known in French as the Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Prescolaire and in Spanish as the Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar) is an international nongovernmental and nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the interests and overall well-being of children in all parts of the world, regardless of race, sex, religion, national or social origin. Known by the acronym OMEP in all languages, it was founded as a result of concerns about young children in the post-World War II era. Lady Marjory Allen from Great Britain learned that the **United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**, newly formed to take over the UN's cooperation activities concerning education, science and culture, did not intend to include the preschool age in its field of activity. Lady Allen had the idea that a new international organization was needed to press UNESCO to address the preschool-age group. She connected with Alva Myrdal of Sweden, and after several international meetings with representatives from many nations, OMEP was established at the 1948 meeting in Prague. Alva Myrdal served as the first Chairman with Lady Allen as Vice-Chairman. The organization was highly influential on the activities of UNESCO in its early years.

By the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, OMEP had over sixty member nations from all over the globe. The official languages of the Organisation remain English, French and Spanish, although other languages may be used. The stated Aims and Objectives of the organization include: to defend and promote the rights of the child, with special emphasis on the child's right of education and care worldwide; to encourage the training of personnel for early childhood education and care; and to collect and disseminate information and to facilitate the understanding of the needs of young children worldwide.

All OMEP members belong through National Committees. National Committees gain full membership after a period as a Preparatory Committee and are required to present an annual report of their activities and pay an annual membership fee. Individual memberships are only for those who are forming a Preparatory Committee in a nation when none exists. Members may be professionals from any discipline with an interest in the well-being of children and their families.

The decision-making body is the World Assembly, composed of the Executive Committee and the Presidents of National Committees. The World Assembly is held once a year, rotating to different nations around the world. The Executive Committee is the administrative body and meets twice a year. Regional or National Committee meetings and conferences may also be held. The OMEP journal, *The International Journal of Early Childhood (IJEC)*, is published twice a year.

During the years of OMEP's existence, progress has been made on behalf of children in such areas as education, nutrition, and jurisprudence; many more nongovernmental organizations are entirely or primarily devoted to children's issues. OMEP retains its close ties with UNESCO and the UNICEF and remains an international network of professionals interested in all the world's children as guided by the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

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Leah Adams

Worthy Wage Campaign

The Worthy Wage Campaign is a national grassroots effort, initiated in 1991 by the **Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW)**, to empower early childhood education practitioners to press for solutions to the poor compensation and low status characteristic of the profession. The campaign was instrumental in raising public awareness of the need to improve job conditions in early childhood education; and in promoting activism, policy initiatives, and legislative activity at the federal, state, and local levels.

The campaign combined leadership and empowerment training for teachers and providers in the early childhood education field with media outreach, public policy work, and community organizing. From its inception, the annual focal point was *Worthy Wage Day*, usually celebrated on May 1, a day of locally based outreach and activism on early childhood education workforce concerns. The campaign created a national network of organizations, practitioners, parents, and other advocates. The CCW provided resources and technical support, offered leadership training opportunities, and organized an annual *Summer Institute*.

Originally conceived as a five-year effort, the Worthy Wage Campaign was coordinated by CCW from 1991 to 1999, and has continued since that time on a more informal basis in a variety of U.S. communities, with Worthy Wage Day observances as well as year-round activism on early childhood education workforce issues.

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Dori Mornan and Marci Young

Y

Yale University Child Study Center (1911–2005)

The history of child development as a scientific field of study is a story of the twentieth century. Although a few notable pioneers made isolated contributions to the beginnings of this field as early as the mid-nineteenth century, it did not really coalesce as an investigative science until well after the turn of the century. And the Yale Child Study Center stands as one of the few institutions—and the only one in a major university and school of medicine—that has been a major source of leadership in the field from the outset to the present. This achievement has several important roots—the position of the Center in a research university, the support of many Presidents and Deans, the devotion of faculty, and the prescience of the senior leadership. An important component has been the capacity for long-term planning and program development that has resulted from the dedication of senior faculty, who have devoted their careers to the Center, and the continuity of senior leadership. In the ninety-four years of its existence, from 1911 to 2005 the Center has had only five directors, each of whom has helped guide the Center during distinctive epochs in the fields of child development and child and adolescent psychiatry.

Founded in 1911 by Arnold **Gesell**, M.D., the Yale Child Study Center was the first academic department of its kind in the world to be devoted exclusively to the scientific study of children's development. Dr. Gesell pioneered the field of child development at the Yale University Clinic of Child Development. Dr. Gesell devoted his career to the study and documentation of normal and deviant behavior and the application of principles from developmental psychology to the field of pediatrics. In 1948, the Child Study Center was established as an autonomous department within Yale University and the School of Medicine, and under the leadership of Dr. Milton Senn, expanded its role as a center of excellence in research and clinical care. Dr. Albert J. Solnit became the director of the Center in 1967, and was instrumental in further broadening the scope of clinical and research programs. An emphasis continued on early development in infants

and young children, serious developmental and neuropsychiatric disorders, and on psychosocial influences affecting the process of development. Programs for disadvantaged children, early educational intervention, crisis intervention, child psychoanalysis, and neuroscience were developed and expanded. Programs of collaboration with other university departments and with state and social service agencies were established. In 1983, Dr. Donald J. Cohen was appointed director and continued the tradition of leadership by researchers and clinicians grounded in child psychiatry, developmental psychology, and developmental pediatrics. In 2002, Dr. Alan Kazdin, as director and building on the well-established research tradition, facilitated an active scholarship on evidence-based treatments and developing innovative psychiatric treatment models for children and adolescents and rigorous empirical evaluation of those models.

The Center continues to maintain major commitments to clinical research in the fields of child development, early childhood education, social policy, child psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and developmental neurobiology. The range of clinical investigative approaches within the Center includes developmental psychology, neurochemistry and neurobiology, genetics, clinical pharmacology, and neuroimaging. In addition, the Center continues its commitment to developing innovative psychiatric treatments for young children and families from infancy through adolescence. The breadth of interest and number of disciplines represented makes for a multidisciplinary scholarly environment well suited to training young investigators and for enhancing collaborative research among midcareer and senior investigators within the department and with faculty in other departments.

Linda C. Mayes

Young Children

Young Children is a bimonthly publication of the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC). This peer-reviewed journal offers early childhood educators and other concerned readers practical and research-based articles on timely topics of interest. NAEYC members receive the journal six times per year as a member benefit and it is also available on a subscription basis.

The journal's readership—more than 100,000 members and subscribers worldwide—work with or on behalf of young children from birth through age eight. Articles might describe research-based teaching strategies, present theories and research, or discuss current policies affecting young children. Each issue includes a cluster of articles that consider different aspects of the same topic. Cluster themes are decided upon many months in advance.

Guidelines for submitting articles and photographs to *Young Children* appear at <http://www.journal.naeyc.org/>. This Web site also includes information about advertising in the journal, subscriptions, and a search tool.

Young Children sponsors a web-based resource, "Beyond the Journal" (www.journal.naeyc.org/btj). At this site, journal authors can share items such

as book lists, planning formats, samples of children's work, or handouts suitable for staff or family workshops. "Beyond the Journal" also includes full-text articles—some reprinted from *Young Children* and some that appear only on the Web—and "Voices of Practitioners," a feature devoted to teacher research.

Derry Koralek

Z

Zero to Three

ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit whose mission is to support the healthy development and well-being of babies, toddlers and families. Founded in 1977 by experts from the fields of pediatrics, research science, mental health, child development and other disciplines, ZERO TO THREE is governed by a multi-disciplinary, internationally renowned Board of Directors. Its founding members include T. Berry Brazelton, Selma Fraiberg, Stanley Greenspan, J. Ronald Lally, Bernard Levy, Reginald Lourie, Peter Neubauer, Robert Nover, Sally Provence, Julius Richmond, Albert Solnit, and Leon Yarrow.

ZERO TO THREE has built a reputation for translating and disseminating cutting-edge knowledge on how to promote the healthy development of infants, toddlers, and their families. The organization's work strengthens and supports all those working to support families of young children in our society.

ZERO TO THREE helps parents better understand their child's social, emotional, and intellectual development. The organization communicates with parents directly through our parent publications, our award-winning Web site: www.zerotothree.org, and extensive outreach to news media. On average, ZERO TO THREE staff and board are quoted several hundred times per year in news reports.

ZERO TO THREE works with infant/family programs to achieve quality and excellence by focusing on the "behind the scenes" issues of staff training, management, and leadership that directly affect the quality of services provided to children and their families. ZERO TO THREE is also the designated provider of training and consultation for **Early Head Start**.

For professionals, ZERO TO THREE unites passion and knowledge, presenting the latest findings from clinical research, providing forums for the exchange of ideas across academic disciplines, and promoting national leadership on behalf of young children. This is done through such venues as the annual National Training Institute, the Leadership Development Initiative, the Task Force on Culture

and Development, the professional Journal: *Zero to Three*, and landmark publications such as *Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood*.

ZERO TO THREE also guides policy makers as they make important decisions regarding what babies and toddlers need for healthy development as well as on successful strategies, components of quality services, and the needed investments on behalf of young children. Projects include the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, State Early Childhood Policy Leadership Forum, National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative, and the Child Welfare Work Group.

In addition, the ZERO TO THREE Press is the publishing arm of the organization. The Press contributes to the definition and advancement of the infant/family field by providing authoritative information, new ideas, and practical resources to promote the healthy development of babies, toddlers, and their families.

For more information, contact ZERO TO THREE at the following addresses: ZERO TO THREE, 2000 M Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036; www.zerotothree.org.

See also Infant Care; Parents and Parent Involvement.

Tom Salyers

Introduction to Volume 4

As acknowledged in the overall Introduction to this handbook, the field of early childhood education has a long history of being influenced by people and ideas across cultural and national boundaries. The provocative ideas of Friedrich Froebel and, later, of Maria Montessori helped establish features of the field that continue to be salient today—a belief in the importance of the early years, sustained interest in the nature and role of a prepared environment, and culturally and philosophically distinct points of view about the nature of the child and the concept of a developmentally appropriate early education. These and other influences with international origins were often the result of privately funded travel by American women who cared deeply about improving conditions for young children—especially those living in deep poverty. Their contributions have been described in the entries in Volumes 1, 2, and 3 of this set. Volume 4 highlights a more recent contribution to the field—that of cross-national perspectives on what is increasingly understood as early childhood education in a new global era.

As the World Turns

The second half of the twentieth century was a period of worldwide transformation in the social and economic structure and dynamics of families with young children, and in the relationships between the private sphere of family life and the public spaces in local communities. Within industrialized societies, the most visible manifestation of this shift has been the movement of mothers into the labor market to engage in paid work. In societies still in the process of industrialization, the change can be seen most strongly in the movement of whole family units from the countryside into the cities, accompanied by a shift from extended to nuclear family structure, or in migratory labor systems where one parent (once typically the father, now increasingly the mother) travels to the city or even abroad for work for extended periods, leaving the other parent or a relative back in the village with full responsibility for the home and family.

Accompanying these changes in the private sphere of the family, and heavily influenced by them, is growing public interest in systems of early education

and care worldwide. Although that interest is not new per se, its manifestation and level of intensity within policy circles has reached unprecedented heights since the 1960s. Visible first in the eastern European countries following World War II (within socialist political systems at that time), *public systems* of early education and care spread into the Scandinavian countries during the 1960s, and into France and Italy soon thereafter. Developments in the still industrializing nations of Asia, Africa, and South America during this same time period were also notable. For instance, in China interest in early childhood education is increasing, and the majority of children aged 3–5 now attend early childhood education programs. South Africa has gone through dramatic changes in early education policy since apartheid was abolished in 1994, shifting from separate services for black, white, and colored children to an emphasis on the rights of all children, with early childhood development as a key area in the process of reconstruction and development. Beginning in the 1980s, South Africa's early care and education policies expanded significantly and program coverage has also grown, despite economic challenges. The World Bank has recognized the importance of early child development and early education as strategies to develop human resources and reduce poverty, expending an estimated \$1.5 billion in the areas during the 1990s.

This interest has been matched by a burgeoning body of scholarship on culture and child development—some of which is acknowledged in topics discussed in Volumes 1, 2, and 3—as well as international and comparative social policy analyses of early childhood education. The literature describing and analyzing early childhood education policies, programs, and concepts in multiple societies and cultures, while not copious, has been significant both in quality and in regularity. The International Study Group for Early Child Care, established in 1969, made the first major contribution, producing extensive monographs addressing child care in nine countries: Hungary, Sweden, the United States, Switzerland, Great Britain, France, Israel, Poland, and India. No attempt was made by this group, however, to compare policies, or the forces shaping policies, across cultures. The work of Sheila Kamerman and Alfred Kahn has been foundational to the cross-national study of early care and education, beginning in 1979 with an introductory examination of family policy in fourteen countries and followed in 1981 with an extensive comparative analysis of child care policies and programs in six countries, all Western and highly industrialized. The next decade (1991) saw publication of yet another Kamerman and Kahn analysis, this time focused on policy innovations in Europe in response to increased demands for child care and parental leave for infants and toddlers. In 1995, the late Sally Lubeck* described cross-national comparative work as not only necessary to our understanding of what is possible under diverse economic and cultural conditions, but also as *essential* to gaining insights into the political positioning of children, their mothers, and the period of early childhood.

* Sally Lubeck was keenly interested in this handbook, particularly its emphasis on cross-national contributions, and had agreed to serve as a member of the Editorial Advisory Board. Her premature death of pancreatic cancer was a major loss to those who knew her as a friend and a colleague as well as to the field of early care and education.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, interest in countries beyond Europe began to be more heavily reflected in the literature. In 1989, a volume edited by Olmstead and Weikart presented fourteen national profiles of child care and early education, six of which were Asian or African. Little cross-cultural comparison was attempted by these authors in that initial publication, but a second volume edited by the same scholars five years later provided comparative data on service usage, the nature of organized facilities, and children's daily routines in eleven of the fourteen countries. In 1992, a pair of Americans (Lamb and Sternberg) and a pair of Swedes (Hwang and Broberg) edited a collection of twelve analytical case studies drawn from five of the six inhabited continents, that placed nonparental child care in social and cultural context and made "cautious and informed comparisons." The following year one of the editors of the current work (Cochran) edited a 29-country International Handbook of Child Care Policies and Programs (also published by Greenwood Publishing Group), including six continents and 80 percent of the world's population. This work included an extensive analysis of the major themes cross-cutting early care and education in these countries, and creation of an analytic framework that has since been further refined by the author (1997) and used as the basis for the development of U.S. policy proposals (2006).

A quantum leap in our understanding of the interface between early childhood education and care and community development was provided in 1992 by Robert Myers' remarkable book *The Twelve Who Survive*, which drew a rich set of examples from African, Asian, and South American countries to identify three general early childhood education-focused development strategies—imposed development, self-actualized development, and partnership—and argued persuasively in favor of the partnership approach. This relationship between early childhood education and community development also caught the attention of global entities dedicated to economic investments. World Bank interest in early childhood education came to the fore in the 1990s, highlighted by a Bank-sponsored conference in 1996 titled *Early Child Development: Investing in the Future*. The proceedings from that conference, published in 1997, emphasized policies and programs in "developing" countries and included papers on the fit between cultures and policies, elements of program quality, parent education and child development, home-based programs for early childhood education, and the financing of early childhood education systems.

Most recently the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducted an extensive review of early childhood education policies and programs in many of its member countries in response to recognition that improving the quality of, and access to, early childhood education and care has become a major policy priority in those countries. One of the editors (New) participated in this review. An integrative report, published in 2001 and titled *Starting Strong, Early Childhood Education and Care*, documents the various strategies that these countries have applied to policy development in this field, noting that these policies and subsequent program development strategies are deeply embedded in particular country contexts, values, and beliefs. The report also documents common challenges and issues shared across diverse national contexts and proposes eight key policy elements for decision makers wishing to "promote equitable access to quality early childhood education and care." Within

the context of what some have referred to as a global era of early childhood education, the U.S. National Research Council commissioned a special Board of Comparative and International Studies to review and write a report on the varying degrees to which cross-national or international studies on education have influenced educational practices in the United States. The title of this report—*Understanding Others, Educating Ourselves*—might well be the subtitle for this fourth volume.

In the preface to the set, we describe the primary purpose of this four-volume work as providing a comprehensive resource on early childhood education for teachers and caregivers, parents, teacher educators, policy planners, and researchers. Given the increasingly global nature of the field of early childhood education and the growing body of knowledge about the cultural variability of interpretations of and provisions for young children's learning and development, this fourth volume is devoted to profiles of early childhood education systems in a diverse set of countries in Asia, Africa, South America, and Oceania as well as eastern and western Europe. Unlike the *International Handbook* published by Greenwood Press in the early 1990s, this volume contains no integrative cross-national analysis of thematic similarities and contrasts. That rich opportunity is left to the reader, and a wealth of information is available to anyone with such interests. For example:

- All twenty-one of the major early childhood education topics included in this volume are addressed by experts from at least two of the ten participating countries, and ten of the topics have five or more national contributors. These subjects are also addressed by American authors in Volumes 1, 2, and 3. This feature allows the American reader not only to learn what an American expert has to offer about curriculum through an American lens and in U.S. settings, but also to compare and contrast this American viewpoint with those of specialists from ten other countries (those countries being Australia, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). Many of the great thinkers from abroad whose ideas and approaches to early education have influenced practices in the United States—not only Montessori and Froebel, but also others, such as Piaget and Malaguzzi—receive attention from American authors in the first three volumes and then are discussed from different perspectives in Volume 4 by writers seeing them from within other cultural frames, in some cases the home cultures of those thinkers themselves. Contributors to Volume 4 also acknowledge the influence of other, lesser-known Western European philosophers and postmodern scholars such as Bakhtin, Foucault, and Bourdieu, whose ideas are entering the U.S. discourse thanks to scholars committed to reconceptualizing the field of early childhood education (see the **Reconceptualists** entry). And, of course, there are still others who have influenced early childhood education in other nations who remain unknown to American early childhood educators. Thus the writings in Volume 4 permit the American reader to peer beyond the natural ethnocentrism of American authors on subjects like pedagogy, play, curriculum, quality, family involvement, inclusion, and teacher preparation by examining these topics through the eyes of experts in cultures as diverse as Sweden, Japan, South Africa, and Brazil.
- Because the four volumes, taken together, include in-depth information about early childhood education in eleven different countries, the contents should be as relevant to audiences abroad as they are to Americans. Both similarities and differences

across cultures provide insights not only to audiences in the countries included in this set, but also to those in other nations as well. For instance, Volume 4 contains five contributions on the topic of play, from Sweden, China, Italy, Brazil, and Japan. In those entries, it is fascinating to find both a common emphasis on play as a way of learning, especially about social norms, rules, and ways of being, and reflections of characteristics specific to each individual culture (e.g., the idea of solidarity in Sweden, the Chinese emphasis on modesty, the Brazilian concept of public spaces). Careful study of articulations of the same topic from different cultural perspectives will enrich the reader's understanding both of concepts in early care and education that transcend individual cultures and the ways that particular cultural beliefs and traditions shape early development through early childhood education. In like fashion, the different disciplinary interpretations of children and early childhood begin to become apparent when contrasting the discussion of play as written by a developmental psychologist in the United States, and as written by scholars of diverse disciplines in other nations. Although these disciplinary distinctions could easily be found in the United States—and in fact, they are apparent in the various entries on “Play”—it is also the case that the field of child development and the discipline of developmental psychology is much more salient in American discussions of early childhood education than in any other country in the world. This set provides the reader with new insights into the various ways in which the social sciences—psychology, philosophy, and sociology—have contributed to contemporary understandings in the field of early childhood education.

- The country profiles and accompanying topical entries in Volume 4 provide a “snapshot” of ten national early education and care systems at a single point in time, the year 2005. But as the brief literature review presented earlier documents, earlier snapshots are available as well. For example, the *International Handbook of Child Care Policies and Programs*, also published by Greenwood Publishing Group, contains in-depth case studies covering nine of the ten nations included here, developed in 1991. Using this reference, and others listed in the Bibliography, together with entries in this set, it is possible to examine patterns of change over time, both in individual societies and across societies. This kind of temporal analysis will reveal early childhood education as a dynamic process, adapting to broader societal changes while at the same time sustaining cultural continuities and exploring creative ways of engaging and supporting children and their families.

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Moncrieff Cochran and Rebecca S. New

Australia

Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia

Introduction

Australia is a nation characterized by distance, diversity, and change. As a democracy, with a federal system of government, power and responsibility are shared between the Commonwealth (the Australian government) and the six-state and two-territory governments. The Australian government is based on the Westminster system. Under the Constitution, citizens elect members of the House of Representatives and the Senate (the house of review of legislation). The states and territories vary in size, population, and their specific systems of democratic government. The state and territory parliaments regulate a further tier of local government by around 750 democratically elected Municipal and Shire Councils.

The Australian government has prime responsibility for collection and distribution of Income Tax and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and sets policy in many areas, including social security, education, and health. While the states and territories also collect a range of taxes, the bulk of their funds are distributed from the Australian government.

A multicultural society of just over 20 million people, Australia occupies a continent with a land area only slightly smaller than the coterminous states of the United States. Most of the population is concentrated on the southeast and east coast, and to a lesser extent in the southwest of the continent, with the majority of Australians living in the capital cities of the states and territories.

The distances between population centers in rural and regional Australia can be vast and the population density varies greatly. Half of the total land area is home to only 0.3 percent of the population. In contrast, the most densely populated 1 percent of the land area is home to 84 percent of the population, making Australia arguably one of the most urbanized nations on the planet.

Indigenous Australians have lived on the continent for over 50,000 years, or 2,000 generations. Seminomadic hunters and gatherers, they moved in small family groups in both the inland and the coastal regions, inhabiting areas of extreme

diversity in climate and terrain from the central desert to the wet tropical north. At the time of European settlement in 1788 their population has been estimated at between 300,000 and one million, with 600 tribes each with its distinct territory, language, and culture. Identification with land, cultural diversity, and mobility strongly characterize Indigenous Australians. Today, there are still 170 Indigenous languages that are spoken by 21 percent of those over 5 years of age. The 410,000 Indigenous Australians recorded in the 2001 census are approximately 2.2 percent of the population.

Migration has added further richness to the diversity of Australia. Since European settlement, the increasingly multicultural character of Australian society has been the result of successive waves of **immigration**, predominantly from the United Kingdom and Europe, although increasingly from Asia and the Middle East. At the last census, around 4 million residents had been born overseas, in one of 200 countries, and a similar number had a parent who had been born outside of Australia. Apart from the Indigenous languages, 111 languages other than English are spoken in this country. In recent years migration has been the major contributor to the average annual increase of 1 percent in Australia's population.

Like most countries in Europe, Australia has experienced considerable change in the age mix of its population. Only 20 percent of the general population is aged under 15 and 6.4 percent under 5. This contrasts with the figures for the Indigenous population, of 38.9 percent and 13.1 percent, respectively. The proportion of the population aged over 65 has been increasing and now represents 12.8 percent of the population. Again, this is in marked contrast to the Indigenous population where only 2.9 percent of the population is over 65 years, reflecting marked differences in health and life expectancy.

The total fertility rate (TFR) of Australia has declined steadily over the last hundred years. The current rate of 1.81 babies per woman is well below the replacement level (2.1), although recently there has been evidence that the TFR continues to rise. The age at which mothers give birth to their first child is rising, with a median age in 2002 of 30.2 years. The infant mortality rate of 5.2 deaths per 100 live births, in 2000, is lower than the UK (5.6) and the USA (7.1) but higher than in Sweden (3.4) and Japan (3.2). Indigenous babies have a mortality rate that is three times that of the general population (15.5 deaths per 1000 live births). In total, at the Census in 2001, Australia had 1.3 million children under 5 years of age, 2.2 million aged from 5 to 12 and 1.4 million aged 13-17.

With regard to family types, most children were born to married couples (69%) and most lived in two-parent families (80%). But only 38.6 percent of all families comprised couples with dependent children. Single-parent families with dependent children have increased from 6.5 percent in 1976 to 10.7 percent in 2001.

One of the most marked social trends has been the rapid increase in the participation of Australian women in the workforce. Approximately 70 percent of women are in some form of paid employment and they account for around 43 percent of the total workforce. Nearly half of those women with a child under 4 years of age worked, although only 15 percent were employed full time while their children were this age. Those with a partner are more likely to work than those who are sole parents. Mothers' workforce participation increases as their children grow older. Of all those with children aged less than 15, two-thirds participate in the workforce.

Early Childhood Education

Australia has a universal system of school education, provided by a mix of government and nongovernment (church and other religious bodies and independent providers). Almost three-quarters are government schools, while 17 percent are under the auspices of the Catholic Church and 10 percent are independent.

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) has responsibility for administering policies and programs for schools and providing financial assistance to state and territory governments and other school education providers. DEST also has a significant responsibility for Indigenous education, including through the provision of preschool education for Indigenous students. The Australian government has taken a leading role in the development of national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy, as part of its commitment to the improvement of attainments in these areas. Early literacy has been a particular focus, nationally.

Responsibility for children's services and education policy involves all levels of government. The national government, however, has a prime responsibility for Child Care Support and for supporting the national quality assurance schemes, via the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCSIA) has the major responsibility for children's services, excluding schools. Its Child Care Program sets policy and funding for long day-care services, including family day care; multifunctional services and multifunctional Aboriginal services; some occasional care centers; and outside-school-hours care services. Subsidies are also provided to central playgroup associations in each state and territory to foster and support playgroups.

Major developments like the National Agenda for Early Childhood and the Head Start for Australia, along with the emergence of advocacy groups such as the National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY) and research networks including the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), highlight the priority that Australia places on its young children. Major initiatives such as the Australian government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy designed to build community capacity to support young children, and complementary state and territory developments, further underscore the continued prominence of early childhood in Australia.

To cater for the education and care of its young children, and to support women's workforce participation, Australia has developed and sustained an extensive and diverse system of children's services including long day-care centers, family day-care schemes and outside-school-hours care services. These services are primarily provided to meet the needs of working parents, but are also used by nonworking parents and those families requiring respite care. Preschools and early learning centers provide educational experiences for children on a sessional basis, prior to school entry.

Service Provision

Early childhood education and care in Australia is a priority policy focus for all levels of government. Of most policy interest are issues related to improving the affordability and access to child care and the enhancement of the educational

and developmental benefits for children of participation in early childhood services. While the focus remains on supporting mothers' workforce participation, increasingly the role of children's services in prevention and early intervention is being highlighted.

Provision of such services is through a mix of public, nongovernment not-for-profit, private for-profit, and private not-for-profit organizations. The private sector provides over 70 percent of center-based child care. Most other early childhood services are provided by state and territory governments, local government, and the nonprofit sector.

Issues of supply, access, affordability, on the one hand, and quality and staffing of children's services, on the other, are of current concern. In terms of supply, around 1.5 million Australian children in the age range from birth to eleven years used care (around half of this age-group). The Australian government expended \$1646 million in 2001–2002 on the provision of child care, with the bulk of this paid as the Child Care Benefit (CCB) to parents, on the basis of the family's income and use of approved child-care services.

The states and territories also provide funding to children's services and are responsible for their regulation and licensing. Their primary responsibility, however, is for the provision of school education, including preschools, and some occasional care centers. Some also contribute financially to outside-school-hours care, long day-care centers, playgroups, and other children's services. The states and territories vary as to where responsibility for early childhood education and care resides. In some it is split between departments of education and community services. In others it is in a single department, typically education.

Local government is involved in the provision of a wide range of services for young children and their families. In addition to providing a wide array of community facilities it may also subsidize or provide long day care, out-of-school hours, and occasional care services, as well as immunization services and parenting courses. The larger councils typically employ an early childhood coordinator.

Access to Services

Australians enjoy a relatively high standard of living, and while there is poverty, it tends not to be concentrated in inner city locations. There are, however, higher than average levels of unemployment, poverty, and disadvantage in rural and remote areas. Distance makes provision of social, health, and educational services a challenge in rural and remote Australia. Provision of early childhood services in these locations is not easy.

Quality

Quality in early childhood centers is directly addressed through the national accreditation program managed by the National Child Care Accreditation Council and through state and territory regulatory and licensing systems. Staffing of children's services remains a major issue, and if Australia is to maintain the high quality of its children's services the supply of well-qualified early childhood educators will need to be increased.

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Alan Hayes

The Sociology of Childhood

The sociology of childhood has been used increasingly as a theoretical perspective in early childhood education since the late 1980s. In Australia, those who draw on the sociology of childhood have tended to use it in similar ways to European counterparts, being guided by six major tenets identified by Prout and James that form the basis of the sociology of childhood. These include the notion that childhood is a "social construction", that childhood is a "variable of social analysis" and is closely connected to other variables such as class and gender, and that children's relationships and cultures are "worthy of study in their own right." Further, children are considered as active (rather than passive) agents in their daily lives and to be competent and knowledgeable about their own lives. Although the sociology of childhood is comparatively young, there has been little analysis of the key tenets of the position. Morss is an exception and raises some fundamental issues for consideration, which include refining the notion of the "socially constructed child," a term that is used widely in much that is written about the sociology of childhood.

The key tenets of the sociology of childhood have been used in various ways throughout the world in research projects that feature children. One way in which this has occurred is through the focus on children's rights. The United Nations (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) has had significant impact internationally on child protection and human rights, notably the debate about child labor, and also on flow-on effects such as the contested area of the protective regulation of children. This manifests itself in continuing tension about the dubious line between adult regulation of children's lives and children's protective rights, especially as the former can restrict the latter and that legislatively in many countries, adults have different rights from children.

With regard to children's protective rights, the sociology of childhood has been used to investigate a range of circumstances such as the ethical responsibilities of involving children in research as participants, the preferences of children

in foster care, and decisions about with whom children will live when their parents divorce or separate. Another way that the sociology of childhood has been used in empirical research is to investigate children's perspectives about their education environments in both before-school settings and the early years of schooling. For the purposes of this encyclopedic entry, examples are drawn from research in Australia that includes involving children as research participants and the understanding that children are competent and knowledgeable about their own lives.

In their attempt to develop a model whereby children can have "input [in]to the process of identifying children's needs in care" Mason and Urquhart confront the complex issue of attempting to balance relationships of power between researchers and children. Their motivation was that research about substitute care for children (such as foster care) continually told stories about children "feeling that their needs were discounted and that they were treated as objects." Mason and Urquhart contend that decisions about the placement of children are based on generalizations about ideological and budgetary considerations that are supported by understandings of the universality (rather than individuality) of children's needs. Although they claim that children are being listened to, they point out that this does not necessarily mean that they are "being heard and responded to in terms of the needs they articulate."

One way around this impasse, the complexities of achieving children's participation in decision making, and ensuring systemic responses that meet their needs is to involve children "actively in the design and development of the processes and structures intended to hear their contributions." (New South Wales Child Protection Council, cited in Mason and Urquhart). In their attempts to develop a collaborative approach that is based on social justice and achieves a balance between what they call Adultist and Children's Movements, Mason and Urquhart's first step was to consult children about how and why children should contribute, and to ask what children needed in the way of support and assistance to be able to contribute. Methodologically, a number of ways for children to participate were offered (focus group discussions, individual or group drawings, writing individual or group narratives), as were feedback sessions where member checking was to be undertaken. The ultimate aim is to develop an approach that integrates children's perspectives with those of carers and decision makers that is informed by social theories, all the while recognizing that children have individual responses and should not be confined to one research category.

The case for developing social capital through responsive and integrated child and family services has been made by Farrell, Tayler, and Tennet. An integral part of this approach has been to seek not only adult, but young children's views about service provision, mainly because of the scarcity of children's voices in such research. Informed by the sociology of childhood, data were gathered from 138 children aged 4-8 attending two public elementary schools in a rural/remote locality and two public elementary schools in an urban setting in the state of Queensland. A practitioner-researcher engaged children in informal conversations in their classrooms to ask about six dimensions of social capital (participation in community activities, neighborhood connections, family and friend connections, feelings of trust and safety, proactivity in a social context, and tolerance of

diversity). Teachers also asked children informally about why they came to school or preschool, what they liked and disliked about coming, and advice they would give to children new to the setting to ensure that they were happy.

According to the children's responses, the social capital of children in the urban community was higher than those in the rural/remote locality. High numbers of children in all age-groups reported feeling safe in the community in which they lived, and responses to the questions asked informally by teachers showed variations in the different age-groups, confirming that purposes, attitudes, and reasons for coming to school change with age. Unsurprisingly, children were troubled by acts of physical and verbal aggression by other children, but were not asked about how they thought such acts should be handled. The children provided advice about effective transitions between early childhood settings and made suggestions about what newcomers need to know that could be incorporated by practitioners, administrators, and policy makers to help children transition successfully to new educational environments.

The impetus for a study by Dockett and Perry was that much of the research about children starting school positions children as research objects by assessing, testing, and observing them. They wanted to know from children's experiences what starting school is like and ways to improve the experience for others. Based on the premise that children have expert knowledge about their own lives and that adults have different understandings of children's lives and their experiences, these researchers gathered children's drawings, photographs that children elected to take, and engaged in conversations with children to gain insight into their perspectives about starting school. Children from four schools in two states of Australia were involved in the project that asked the children to share their expertise with those who were soon to begin school. The four schools reflect a cross section of socioeconomic, rural, urban, isolated, and religious characteristics, and some of the photographs taken by the children are included in the article. This study recognizes the knowledge children have about their own lives in regard to starting school, and aims to use their expertise to improve transition programs and experiences associated with beginning school. It is further evidence of the value of involving children as research participants and seeking their perspectives about matters that are significant to them and that pertain directly to them and their successful movement into school environments.

As well as using the expertise of children to improve transitions to school, the sociology of childhood has been employed to show the competence of young children in everyday language interactions in constructing their own social orders in a preschool classroom (Danby). To illuminate understandings of the sociology of childhood, Danby contrasts viewing young children as competent language users with typical child development perspectives such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, where children are considered to be in the process of developing language skills and achieve competence as adults. A detailed analysis of several excerpts from a transcript of three boys aged 3-4 who are playing in the block area, reveals the intricacy and intensity of the interactions and emotions and how relationships can change quickly. Although the teacher was engaged at one stage, she retreated after a short time, advising the boys to sort the situation out for themselves. The verbal and nonverbal language competence of the boys was

unmistakable, causing Danby to make some suggestions for practitioners to reflect on how they understand children.

From the analysis provided, the point that these three boys are highly competent and knowledgeable about their own lives and experiences is undeniable. However, practitioners would do well to consider some of the other tenets of the sociology of childhood alongside such evidence. For example, while much of the sociology of childhood is given over to research and discussion about adult regulation of children's lives and children's protective rights, it is also necessary to consider the rights and responsibilities of children as they 'play' in early childhood educational environments, and how they are to learn about and respect such rights and responsibilities.

In Australia, while research informed by the sociology of childhood is in its infancy, it has much to offer to children and adults, especially adults working in early childhood settings who must do more than merely observe children's play.

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Susan Grieshaber

Multicultural Education and Cultural Diversity

The initial phase of multicultural education in Australia was primarily conceived as a project to improve the educational and social opportunities of cultural and linguistic "minorities." Although being of a cultural and linguistic "minority" does not automatically predestine a child to educational failure or lack of social mobility, it is undoubtedly the case that the educational prospects of particular cultural and linguistic groups are adversely affected under particular circumstances. A view of multicultural education as something that exclusively addresses "minorities," either as groups inequitably excluded from social access or as a positive presence, however, has its own limitations and difficulties.

From this early experience in Australia, it was realized that new visions of multicultural education were needed, visions that have the potential to transform pedagogy for all students, and to reconstitute mainstream social and educational practices in the interests of all.

Differences in Educational Success Rates

We know that some groups of students are more successful in school than other groups. We acknowledge that not all opportunities are evenly distributed and we refer to this as a question of “disadvantage.” This is usually conceptualized as a checklist of educationally disadvantaged groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Students from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Students in poverty, or from low socioeconomic status families and localities.
- Girls, and sometimes also on some measures, boys.
- Students with disabilities.
- Students in rural and/or isolated communities.

In the Australian context, however, it has become evident that these groups are in fact habitually, perennially disadvantaged, giving lie to any claim that opportunities are equal. The problem in each case is the distance between these worlds of community experience and the world of institutionalized education and valued knowledge.

However, despite its undeniable truth, the checklist represents a view that is too simplistic, since:

- Some students in these groups do succeed, background is not all-determining. Indeed, sometimes it is a student’s “disadvantaged” background that is the basis for their particular resilience, their peculiar success.
- There are more disadvantaged citizens than those found in the groups in the list; and many more individuals who fail as a result of particular conjunctions of community or lifeworld experience.
- The groups are not separate; they are overlapping, simultaneous, multilayered. In fact, virtually every individual represents a peculiar conjunction, a unique mix of group or community experiences.
- The groups are defined via relationships—of comparative power, privilege, and access to resources. Each group is created through a series of historical and ongoing intergroup relationships. These relationships (e.g., racism, sexism, comparative socioeconomic privilege) often play themselves out through schools and classrooms.
- The group categories oversimplify critical success and failure-determining differences within groups and between individuals.
- They create labels for categories, implying a deficit on the part of the student, when in fact they may be an opportunity upon which we might build a worthwhile learning experience.

The Notion of “Lifeworld”

Recognizing the notion of the “lifeworld,” one’s everyday life or community experience, is important since it represents an opportunity to encapsulate the full spectrum of differences across all the students in the classroom. Note that when we are talking about cultural differences as a critical determiner of outcomes, we are talking about the broad dynamics of power and privilege, of history and location, and of the accident of birth and life experience

Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in the Classroom

When we consider ethnic and linguistic diversity in classrooms, the two big-group categories Indigenous and Non-English Speaking are too simple and over-generalized to account for relative advantage or disadvantage of students in our schools. A fine-grained understanding of every student's cultural and linguistic background and lifeworlds would include the following information about the students:

- Country/place of birth; country/place of birth of parents
- Indigenous ancestry, or recency of **immigration**; if recent, parents' visa category (e.g., refugee, business)
- Ethnic or Indigenous identity
- Religion
- Perceptions of "race"
- First language spoken; language(s) spoken at home
- English language proficiency of student and parents
- Variant of English spoken (e.g., Aboriginal English, working-class Australian English, "wog" English)
- Literacy level of parents in first or other languages

In addition, gender, socioeconomic status, and other variables such as disability, may be integral and inseparable aspects of culture, ethnicity, and language. Consistent with recent developments in multicultural policy in Australia, in which the category "non-English speaking background" (NESB) has been contested and calls made to abandon it, the above pointers focus on the following:

- The cultural and linguistic profile of every student; and
- A much broader range of variables than those identified by the category "NESB" which, for curriculum and school planning purposes, are (a) more closely related to categories of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data and (b) represent a more finely grained predictor of educational outcomes.

Working with Cultural Differences in Education: Alternative Models

In dealing with cultural differences, there are four archetypal forms of modern education approaches: exclusion, assimilation, superficial multiculturalism, and a more inclusive approach we have called pluralism.

Exclusion. Education as exclusion means not being able to gain access for success in the education system. It also includes those who experience failure once in the system. There can be a variety of reasons for exclusion, and these all reflect the kind of distance that exists between the student's lifeworld and institutionalized education. Distancing features include, for example, the education you can afford; what you know you can realistically wish for from education; what you expect; and what you can slip into more or less comfortably. In the modern era, where education is compulsory and the promise of equity through education universal, exclusion can also exist as a powerful form of inclusion. As a consequence of this exclusion, you will do certain kinds of work, become a certain kind of citizen, have a certain kind of relationship to the icons of belonging—and the results of your education will have in part "explained" this for you.

Assimilation. Education as assimilation means gaining access to institutionalized education and succeeding by adhering to the protocols and practices inherent to it. Assimilation requires leaving behind your old self and lifeworld as past experience, and then gaining experience and expertise in those lifeworlds closest to the culture of education.

Superficial multiculturalism. Education as a superficial multiculturalism means that, at a surface level, the system recognizes the variability of lifeworlds—a kind of “spaghetti and polka” multiculturalism. However, in reality, it requires adopting the image of those lifeworlds closest to the culture of institutionalized learning and “mainstream” power. Different lifeworlds might be made an object of study or celebrated as folkloric color, but only insofar as the fundamental framework of seeing, valuing, and knowing remains singular and undisturbed.

Cultural pluralism. Education as pluralism recognizes that you don’t have to be the same to have similar opportunities. Pluralism involves a subtle but profound shift from a more superficial multiculturalism. Pluralism means that the mainstream—be that the culture of the dominant groups or such institutional structures as education—is transformed. Instead of representing a single cultural destination, the mainstream is a site of openness, negotiation, experimentation, and the interrelation of alternative frameworks and mindsets. Learning is not a matter of “development” in which you leave your old selves and lifeworlds behind. Rather, learning is a matter of repertoire—starting with the recognition of lifeworld experiences and using them as a basis for extending what you can do. The pluralist process of transformation, then, is not a matter of vertical progress but one of expanding horizons. These new horizons have an impact on the lifeworld: learners still engage in and with their lifeworlds in new ways, but not necessarily to leave those lifeworlds behind.

Genuine equity cannot be achieved in any but the pluralist alternative. In fact, the first three forms of inclusion are simultaneously rationalizations of exclusion; the first explicitly so and the other two by way of practice. In all three, the pattern of those who are more likely to miss out on opportunities reflects the relative distances of lifeworlds to the culture of power and the culture of institutionalized education. The crossover is more possible for some than for others. Only pluralism is even-handed, because negotiating cultural differences is the main objective.

The Dichotomy of Pluralism

Pluralism is both an ambitious program and a minimalist, unambitious program. It is ambitious in the sense that it is based on the argument that the mainstream needs to be transformed. It is unambitious in that it does no more than take the limited equity argument at its word. To the question of what are the conditions of mere equity—not equality—the only answer can be an educational system that does not habitually favour and reward some lifeworld experiences over others. This is to do no more than to take at its word the apologetic rhetoric of a society which does not pretend to have an equality of outcomes, just “opportunity” for all. Pluralism is the only way the system can possibly do even that; the only way it

can possibly be genuinely fair in its distribution of opportunity, as between one group and another, one kind of lifeworld experience and another.

Making curriculum culturally inclusive. Cultural differences are interwoven through the patterns of relative advantage and disadvantage that characterize schooling, as well as society. One of the fundamental purposes of education is to provide learning, and as a consequence, social opportunities for all. Equity, however, can only be achieved through a curriculum that engages every student in such a way that their opportunities are optimized. Education for pluralism requires a culturally inclusive curriculum that recognizes the differences among students and provides every student with learning experiences that optimize their opportunities. The key features of an inclusive curriculum are (a) recognition of students' differences, (b) classroom and curriculum flexibility and curriculum customization such that every student is provided learning experiences that engage their particular capacities, needs, and interests, (c) measurable outcomes which optimize each student's learning and social possibilities. Inclusive curriculum requires a complementary mix of strategies focused on opportunity and strategies focused on diversity.

Opportunity. It is important to design educational strategies that provide access to the dominant or "mainstream" culture, its ways of thinking, communicating, and being. Dominant educational values are expressed and measured at the key points of assessment and credentialing. Key access strategies might include English as a Second Language instruction and explicit teaching to the rules of the assessment and credentialing system. In this task, education has a crucial intervention role to play in the politics of *redistribution* of social resources.

The balance between *strategies for opportunity* (or access) and *strategies for diversity* is critical. Strategies to improve access that neglect diversity tend to drift toward discredited and ineffectual educational strategies akin to "assimilation." The underlying message of a curriculum which overemphasizes access is that the ideal knowledge and skills are those expressed by the dominant culture, and other cultures are, in one way or another, inferior. It also leads to old-fashioned, didactic forms of "transmission" pedagogy, which fail for their lack of relevance, and for their failure to mesh with students' interests and aspirations.

Diversity. Diversity recognizes curriculum strategies honoring differences amongst students by including those differences as the subject matter of the curriculum, by valuing different learning styles, and by allowing for different learning outcomes depending on student background and aspirations. Such strategies should aim to build constructively upon student experience, interest, and motivation. In this task, education has a crucial interventionary role to play in the politics of social and cultural *recognition*, the politics of belonging.

Strategies for diversity that neglect access may appear "relevant" or "appropriate" yet fail to challenge students or fail to take them into realms of opportunity outside of their existing or community experience. They may, in fact, silently help the already advantaged and hurt the disadvantaged. This is the danger of

a superficial multiculturalism. Multicultural education is not about the unreflective preservation of differences, since keeping things just the way they are preserves the relationships of inequality. It is about transformations whereby learners change themselves in and through learning, while nevertheless remaining true to their selves, their lifeworld experiences, and their communities. This is a matter of cultural transformation through self-determination and self-redefinition. A pluralistic version of multiculturalism extends the dominant culture and even transforms what is considered mainstream. It helps redefine the “mainstream” as multicultural, as a place that is diverse in its very nature and in which all people can benefit from that diversity.

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Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope

Families and Children in Australia

Many factors, including improved contraception, the legalization of abortion, and the widely publicized detrimental effects of institutionalization, have resulted in nearly all Australian children growing up in a family even if it is not their biological family. In fact, in Australia (2003), very few children grow up in institutions (200) or in correctional centers (500). However, currently children of refugees are held in detention centers with their families while their claims are being processed.

Although most Australian children grow up in families, children’s experiences of childhood differ as a function of the structure of their family, their parents’ socioeconomic circumstances, and the cultural background into which they are born.

Changes in the Structure of Australian Families

Women’s participation in the workforce. Over the past few decades there have been several major changes in conceptualizing what constitutes an Australian family. There has been a decline of the “traditional” family type of mother as homemaker, father as breadwinner, and children. The most obvious area of change has been the increased participation of women with dependent children in the paid workforce. Currently the most common pattern in families with children under 15 years of age is both parents are in paid employment. Eight percent of children in Australia, however, are in families where both parents are unemployed.

The increase of one-parent families. The other major change in family structure has been a large increase in one-parent families (an increase of 53% between 1986 and 2001). One-parent families now make up 23 percent of all families with dependent children. More than one in five children under 15 years of age is now living with one parent, generally their mother (20.3% of families with dependent children are headed by a single-parent mother and 2.7% are headed by a single parent father).

Cohabitation before marriage. In addition, about three-quarters of couples in Australia now live together before they marry, in contrast to patterns of the mid-1980s. De facto relationships are now recognized by law, and as a result many couples are choosing not to marry. This trend not to marry may partly explain why close to a third of the children in Australia are now born outside a formal marriage.

Socioeconomic circumstances of families. In affluent families, the expectation of health and access to good health care, combined with a low birth-rate and a greater use of prenatal testing, has led to an assumption that if they chose to have children, parents will have one or two *perfect* children. The emphasis has moved beyond desiring the basic survival of children, to the desire that children must fulfill “their potential.” To achieve this goal, a growing number of families invest resources in private education and extra tuition fees for their children. Such expectations for children have led to less emphasis on children’s useful contributions to the family in terms of responsibility and work at home. At the other end of the spectrum, for children from economically disadvantaged families, there seems to be an increasing sense of social alienation as they struggle to find the money to participate in such basic activities as school excursions, much less afford the fees for child care and preschool.

Cultural Diversity in Australian Families

Australia is a country characterized by the migration of a diverse range of people. Recent statistics show that the first Australians, or Indigenous Australians, currently comprise 2.2 percent of Australia’s population of just over 20 million people. The British colonized Australia in the eighteenth century and this is reflected in the population today. The three most common ancestries reported in the 2001 census were Australian (people born in Australia of various ancestries including Indigenous people), English, and Irish. Immediately following the Second World War, people from Europe (largest groups were from Italy, Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands) immigrated to Australia. More recently, people of Lebanese, Vietnamese, Indian, Chinese, and many other ancestries (approximately 160 in total) have joined the Australian population. In the 2001 census, over half of the children under the age of 15 reported having Australian ancestry, with most having been born in Australia and having at least one Australian-born parent. Within some ancestry groups, notably Vietnamese, Lebanese, and Chinese, many families speak a language other than English at home. The diversity of languages and cultures in Australia adds to its social wealth as well as challenging

the English language and Anglo-Saxon cultural dominance of many services for children and families in Australia.

Indigenous Families

In the 2001 census, 410,000 people considered themselves to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait origin. While most live in major cities or in regional centers, proportionally more Indigenous than non-Indigenous people live in remote areas of Australia. As a group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffer multiple disadvantages: poor health, a higher rate of infant mortality, a reduced life expectancy compared to non-Indigenous Australians, lower rates of employment, lower rates of educational achievement, higher rates of incarceration, a high incidence of domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, and limited infrastructure and services in remote areas.

While forecasts for the general Australian population over the next few decades predict that there will be a larger proportion of older people than children in the population, the reverse is true for the Indigenous population, where it is predicted that there will be more children than older people. This has implications for services for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders, particularly in health and education, as there are a large number of dependents and relatively few adults to provide for them. In addition, Indigenous parents are often poor, young, and relatively uneducated—characteristics that point to the need for parenting support. High levels of unemployment, domestic violence, and abuse also create an unpredictable and sometimes dangerous backdrop for Indigenous children.

This need for support is counteracted, to some extent, by the strong sense of family and community in Indigenous culture. This characteristic leads to a lesser sense of isolation than might be experienced by non-Indigenous families in the same circumstances. However, since life expectancy is twenty years shorter for Indigenous Australians than for the non-Indigenous Australians, grandparents are not as available to provide support to families and children.

Managing Work and Family

Women in the paid workforce. Over the past twenty years, Australian women have become increasingly involved in the paid workforce. As a result, families have needed to actively manage their work and family responsibilities. Despite the increased dependence on the wages of both parents, the patterns of women's involvement in the labor force is consistent with mothers rather than fathers assuming most family responsibilities at home. As their children grow older, more mothers join the paid labor force and mothers are more likely to shift from part-time to full-time work. In contrast, patterns of fathers' participation in the workforce are unaffected by the ages of their children and as a result, most fathers work full-time jobs.

Managing work and family in Australia has been made more difficult for dual wage earners and single-earner families because of a shift away from standard working hours to longer hours and to "flexible" yet "unsocial" working hours involving early mornings, evenings, and weekends. There is considerable concern

over the impact of these changes on parents and their relationships with their children and each other. In addition, there has been a trend toward more casual work, with one in three positions now offered on a casual basis. This has led to greater financial insecurity that has a detrimental effect on family well-being.

Child care is difficult for parents to organize as there is a shortage of places and trained staff in formal child care, such as long day-care centers and family day-care schemes. This is especially the case for children under 2 years, and as a consequence, child-care hours are generally structured around a standard working day. As a result, parents are forced to create a patchwork of formal and informal care arrangements, resulting in a third to a half of Australian children in their first three years attending two or more care settings a week.

Support from within the extended family is a crucial resource for families. Without support in the form of information, financial and practical help such as grandparents' assistance in the care of young children, families become isolated and their children suffer. It is unusual in Australia for members of the extended family to live in the household of "nuclear" families, although this is more likely in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, reflecting a wider kinship system.

The role of grandparents in the lives of children has been of increasing interest to researchers and policy makers. Non-Indigenous grandparents are living longer and having a longer period of shared lives with their grandchildren. When grandchildren are of preschool age and their parents are in the workforce, many grandparents act as regular part-time caregivers and are increasingly awarded custodial care of their grandchildren when parents are unable to care for them. In this way, they often take on shared parenting roles in the care of their grandchildren.

Children's Services and Families

In their engagement with families and children, children's services in Australia need to cater to the diversity of family structures and cultural and language backgrounds. While services attempt to include culturally sensitive practices, from the viewpoint of culturally and linguistically diverse families, children's services are often seen as institutions that teach the values of mainstream Australian culture. Some migrant groups enroll their children in centers for this very reason, to learn about Australian society. Other groups, including Indigenous families, prefer not to send their children to children's services because of the perceived difference in child rearing approach and values (as well as other reasons such as cost and lack of transport and services). Indigenous children have a very low rate of participation in prior to school services in Australia.

Australian policy. In Australian government policy, child-care services are seen as primarily serving the needs of employed parents. In some cases, child care or preschool is used to give families in need or with histories of abuse respite care for their children. There is a legislative requirement through the national accreditation system for children's services to work in partnership with parents. Australian centers are working on finding ways to effectively develop this partnership; however, one constraint limiting family involvement is the long hours of

employment, limiting parents' availability for participation. Another constraint is that the majority of child care in Australia is now privately owned and more likely to have a "service" than "partnership" orientation toward families.

Increasingly in Australia, children's services are seen as one of many community services, government and nongovernment, that help support families with young children. In North Queensland, for example, community hubs have been established around many children's services to provide "one-stop shopping" for family support services. This is also the model used around Australia in many children's services for Indigenous children and families.

In line with this trend, children's services in Australia are providing formal support for families as well as care and education for children under school age. This has been done in a number of ways such as encouraging parents to form social networks, and providing parent education sessions on topics as diverse as nutrition and approaches to discipline. Additionally, informal support regarding children's services has always been provided for parents. The involvement of children's services in interagency collaboration with other services for children and families has only just begun to happen in Australia and this holds great promise for an integrated approach to assisting families in raising their children during the early years.

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Jennifer Bowes

Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education

Pedagogy is not a readily used term to describe teaching and learning practices in the Australian preschool (before formal schooling) context. Instead, early childhood educators refer to their program or curriculum approach, teaching techniques, and personal philosophy; and it is this combination that makes up their pedagogy. Pedagogies in early childhood education vary from setting to setting due to the individual's personal teaching and learning style, their underpinning educational philosophy and epistemological beliefs, state curriculum policies and requirements, religious and philosophical orientation of the actual early childhood setting, and the type of community that the preschool is situated within. Here we review *traditional* and *emerging pedagogies* within Australian settings for early childhood education, and focus on the pedagogies found in preschool programs (programs for under 6-year-olds) that are located in schools, kindergartens, and child-care centers.

One of the main reasons that the term pedagogy has traditionally *not* been used in preschool education is that it has been viewed by early childhood practitioners as (primary) school terminology denoting formal teaching and learning, one that implies a direct transmission of knowledge approach. Pedagogy in preschool education is largely determined instead by the teachers' own personal philosophy, usually built from theories acquired in their initial teacher training or gained through teaching experience. In the case of the state of Victoria, where there is no recommended, prescribed nor mandated curriculum framework operating for teachers of under 6-year-olds, one significant educational implication this brings is the issue of teachers' curricula freedom, where the teachers are able to determine and devise their own curriculum framework, content, and pedagogy. More often than not, this results in a teacher-devised curricular framework and pedagogy that ultimately rests upon dominant discourses, dominant theories, and practices familiar and accepted by the teacher. The dominant early childhood teaching and learning practices in Australia will now be explored.

Child-Centered Pedagogies

Foundational to many preschool programs are *child-centered pedagogies*, practices that are informed by child development theories and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). Child-centered pedagogies view the child in individual terms or as a person who is not yet developed or underdeveloped, and this child is then observed, assessed, and planned for within a child development frame. The child is the focus of the educator's study and is planned for individually through the lens of the main developmental domains; social and emotional development, cognitive, fine, and gross motor development. Acting as a catalyst, the child's "interest" is used to drive the curricula content decisions while being embedded within a developmental frame, one that singles out and matches the interest to the child's developmental "need." In many cases this type of learning entails minimal adult interaction except for the educator setting up the learning environment, monitoring, "scaffolding," and sanctioning the type of play and learning the child engages in.

Other child-centered pedagogies that feature within Australian early childhood programs have their own distinctive traditions and practices, including **Montessori** and **Steiner** education, and programs' using Gardner's multiple intelligences theory as the basis for their educational direction. Depending on the program, they can be either highly teacher-directed or highly child-initiated with the common feature being their child-centeredness that features *planning for the individual child* based on the child's needs, interests, and strengths. This is in stark contrast to the school context, where the curriculum content shapes the pedagogy and the educator's main role is to teach specific knowledge sets and skills. However, having said this, this distinction is now becoming less defined as recent examples show that there are more intersections between school and preschool pedagogies, with some primary schools adopting **Reggio Emilia**-inspired pedagogy and some preschool educators taking on board principles from *Productive Pedagogies*, an inquiry-based pedagogy with its origins deriving from the Queensland school system.

Although *play-based pedagogies* can share some common elements with that of child-centered pedagogies, such as basing practices upon child developmental theories, they are not necessarily the same in pedagogical terms. This is due to the main feature of play-based pedagogies, the belief that children learn through play. This can be witnessed in the form of uninterrupted play, free play, structured play, with the teaching techniques ranging from highly adult interventionist to minimal or no adult intervention. Play-based pedagogies are the foundation of most early childhood programs and are interpreted and practiced in many ways.

Sociocultural and Inquiry-Driven Pedagogies

New pedagogies are changing the educational landscape within preschool education. Viewing children as capable, competent persons and co-constructors of their learning are the common features of these new teaching practices and are inspired by inquiry-driven, critical, and postmodern pedagogies. This shifts the frame from seeing the child in individualist terms, or as a child who is underdeveloped with developmental needs, to that of seeing them as capable people traveling on their lifelong learning journey. One such pedagogy, inspired by sociocultural theories, has resulted in a growing number of research projects and publications that describe early childhood practices from this frame. Fler and Richardson provide an example by documenting how early childhood practitioners have moved across educational paradigms, in this case from a constructivist-developmental framework to a sociocultural pedagogical approach. Drawing from the sociocultural theories of Lev Vygotsky, Malaguzzi, Rogoff, and others, Fler and Richardson highlight some of the tensions and resistance that can occur when pedagogy shifts and new conceptual tools replace the familiar. In this particular study, new key pedagogical principles and practices are revealed and a transformation of theoretical understandings takes place. This type of work is shifting the pedagogical frame in the Australian early childhood context.

Even though sociocultural theories and practices are making inroads, at the forefront of pedagogical change within Australian early childhood settings is the phenomenon of the Reggio Emilia approach. Stemming from the small region of Reggio Emilia, Italy, innovative early childhood programs founded by Loris Malaguzzi relatively recently appeared on Australian shores and the approach barely requires an introduction to worldwide early childhood educators. The effect of this educational approach and its wide-ranging pedagogical influence is paramount as an increasing amount of early childhood programs are based on some sort of connection to this orientation. Early childhood educators are being hired based on their knowledge of “Reggio,” and their ability to “do Reggio” are keenly sought after pedagogical skills. The discrimination of the transference of this pedagogy to the Australian context varies, with some programs taking the “best aspects” of Reggio Emilia and others taking on board and duplicating as many Reggio Emilia principles and practices that they can. The pedagogical impact of the Reggio Emilia approach is overwhelmingly positive, with educators incorporating inquiry-driven teaching and learning practices including child-initiated projects, and carrying out comprehensive documentation practices. Even though the early childhood programs and approaches of Reggio Emilia have broadened

early childhood teaching practice within Australia, some skepticism should be maintained to ensure that the process of pedagogical reconceptualization is an ongoing process; a process that includes curricular renewal to best fit the educational context, and a process aware of the many curricular theories and pedagogies that are available. Reconceptualizing early childhood pedagogy guided by postmodern and critical theories is one example of how to distill the familiar, as practice guided by this frame of reference reveals educational inequities so that they can be challenged and ultimately overcome.

Postmodern and Critical Pedagogies

Currently gaining momentum in early childhood education are pedagogies that aim to transform culture and change the status quo, derived and informed by postmodernism, poststructuralism, feminism, postcolonialism, and critical theories (MacNaughton, 2003). These postmodern pedagogies have entered preschool educational discourse and practice, but still have a long way to go, educationally speaking, and much more to offer early childhood education. These critical pedagogies are driven by principles of social transformation and democratic education and provide educators a language of critique and possibility. Critical pedagogies unravel salient and critical issues within educational contexts and provide educators with the ability to examine “hidden” aspects of their curriculum. In their text, MacNaughton and Williams categorize early childhood teaching techniques into two main areas, *general teaching techniques* that are common pedagogical techniques and *specialist teaching techniques* that originate from diverse theoretical perspectives. The general teaching techniques category is comprised of commonly found early childhood teaching approaches such as demonstrating, describing, encouraging, facilitating, modeling, questioning, and so on, whereas specialist teaching techniques that are quite new to early childhood education are co-constructing, community building, deconstructing, empowering, and philosophizing, and so forth. Of pedagogical interest here are the specialist teaching techniques that generate new and different ways to view pedagogy and ultimately educate young children. By drawing from new and diverse philosophical and epistemological theories, the challenge that the Australian early childhood community has set itself is to promote and sustain new pedagogies, in order to continue to shift the pedagogical frame to accommodate the changing nature of society and education. It is for this reason that early childhood pedagogies are thought of in multiple terms, highlighting the theoretical choices, discourse alternatives, and practice possibilities that are available to educators.

Critical perspectives are most useful for early childhood education as they view the preschool site as an environment that can be inequitable and unjust for some, particularly disadvantaged groups who often consist of lower socioeconomic groups, Indigenous Australians, recent immigrants, or other people of disadvantage. Arguably one of the least known critical pedagogies is that of Indigenous Australians. As Fasoli and Ford found out, there is little research literature on Indigenous Australian pedagogies in early childhood contexts. These writers consequently maintain that it is vital to employ Aboriginal educators where possible when educating Aboriginal children, and non-Aboriginal educators should

become aware of the complex relationship structure and the importance placed on relationships within Australian Indigenous perspectives, rather than just apply an Anglo-Australian version of “culturally appropriate activities.” They argue that, “. . . in understanding Indigenous practices, was not so much to modify programs to include Indigenous content but rather to focus on relationships as critical when dealing with Indigenous children in an early childhood setting.” As some of the most disadvantaged people within Australia, Indigenous Australian pedagogies require close and careful consideration to rethink and change educational bias and prejudiced practices.

The emergence of new technologies is also changing the way that early childhood education is practiced. O’Rourke and Harrison have reported that the inclusion of new technologies, particularly the computer, can be a catalyst for reconceptualizing the early childhood program and pedagogy. Preschool educators in their study claim that by introducing the computer to their early childhood program it has broadened the preschool’s horizons and has had positive program implications.

Not all pedagogies could be mentioned here and even though pedagogies have been discussed as separate entities it is common for early childhood practitioners to be eclectic in their approach and combine varying pedagogies to make up their own teaching and learning repertoire. By discussing various pedagogies it is anticipated that early childhood educators will appreciate the limitless bounds of theoretical inspiration from which their pedagogies can draw, and the educational impact on our young children that these pedagogies can ultimately have.

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Anna Kilderry

Creativity and Imagination

Creativity is a concept that has a wide range of meaning and understandings, particularly in the education sector. In Australia, the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission (VSIC) initiated a creativity pilot program with four schools during 2004. The intention of the pilot was to raise teachers’ awareness about creativity, to test ideas as to how best to promote children’s creativity, and to identify how to embed creative learning across the curriculum. This work has been continued and expanded through the Australian Centre for Effective Partnerships, who have brokered a range of innovative partnerships between schools and creative practitioners.

Conceptualizing Creativity

An advisory group on creativity was established by VSIC consisting of representatives from a wide range of creative sectors and industries. The group set out to describe creativity in such a way that it would be useful for teachers and the education sector in general and developed the following guiding concept in 2004:

When we are creative we see the world in new ways, we ask new questions, we imagine new possibilities and we seek to act in such a way that makes a difference.

They maintained that creativity entails the following:

- use of imaginative, intuitive, and logical thinking
- a fashioning process where ideas are shaped, refined, and managed
- pursuing purposes to produce tangible outcomes from goals
- disciplined application of knowledge and skills to make new connections
- originality or production of new ideas, perspectives, or products
- expression influenced by values
- the value of what is produced is open to the judgments of others
- collaboration, evaluation, review, and feedback

In this conception of creativity, imagination is intrinsic to the creative process and operates as children develop their capacity for creative thinking and action. Imagination is concerned with the generation of ideas through exploration, representation, and conjecture. Imaginative thinking and creativity are significant as children construct knowledge and learn to communicate ideas.

The Role of Creativity in Learning: Rationale for a National Focus

Creativity is increasingly being seen as a key component to the individual's well-being, sense of fulfillment, cultural identity, and economic success. In response to such international imperatives, the VSIC Advisory Group identified the following four points as rationale for increasing the focus on creativity in schools:

1. *Creativity enables individuals to structure rewarding and fulfilling lives.* The world that our children face will be complex, ambiguous, and uncertain. They need to be equipped with curiosity and confidence in order to exercise choice and respond positively to opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities. Children need creativity to manage risk and cope with change and adversity. A creative life generates excitement and personal delight. Creativity also emerges from the struggle to negotiate conflicts between ourselves and our surrounding world.
2. *Creativity stimulates learning.* When provided with the opportunity to be creative, children are more likely to make full use of the information and experiences available to them and extend beyond habitual or expected responses. When children are encouraged to think independently and creatively, they become more interested in discovering things for themselves, more open to new ideas, and keen to work with others to explore ideas. As a result, self-motivation, pace of learning, levels of achievement and self-esteem increase. By developing the capacity of teachers to use their own creativity in their teaching practices, we increase the

opportunity for students to develop their ideas in safe, creative, learning environments. This capacity to transfer, transform, create, and innovate is an important dimension of twenty-first century literacy practices.

3. *Creativity as a driving force of economic growth.* Today's global economy increasingly relies on knowledge, creativity, and innovation. Knowledge, imagination, and individual creativity are the wellspring of innovation as nations attract, retain, and develop creative people. This ability to innovate is increasingly acknowledged as *the* critical corporate asset of the twenty-first century and a major source of individual, corporate, and national competitive advantage. By supplanting land, labor, and capital, nations use creativity to stay "ahead of the pack." Creativity, innovation, inventiveness, entrepreneurship, and enterprise are valued social capital.
4. *Creativity in response to social, cultural, and environmental issues.* Flexible, creative approaches are required if society is to respond positively to the challenges and responsibilities associated with rapid change, uncertainty, and adversity. Schools and communities that equip students to be creative will generate individuals capable of fueling a vibrant and innovative cultural, social, and economic life. Individuals can transform society if they learn to act together and generate new ideas. The state of social cohesion, environmental sustainability, economic prosperity, and effective governance will depend on the abilities of people to unlock their creative potential. Current social, cultural, and environmental attitudes and beliefs can be reconsidered when people respond to new interactions and fresh connections, and collaborate.

The implications for education are therefore significant. Teachers face a major challenge as they go beyond simplistic understandings of creativity as self-expression. Creativity must be understood in the classroom beyond children's responses to open-ended tasks. This will require teachers to reconsider creativity as a rich and disciplined inquiry vital for the effective communication of ideas.

A Framework for Creativity: Where to Look in Assessment

Teachers in the creativity pilots adopted and continue to use the following conceptual framework developed by the IDES network in conjunction with Learning and Teaching Scotland:

The Person—characteristics, abilities, and skills we encourage and give space for.

These include the following:

- predispositions
- preferences
- cognitive and metacognitive abilities
- knowledge and specific skills

The Process—the relevant strategies and approaches we adopt and employ in successful creative exploits. These include the following:

- flexibility and openness
- facilitation of specific knowledge
- skills
- acceptance of alternatives
- stimulus and ownership

The Product—the outcomes of the creative endeavor. These include the following:

- tangible products
- personal satisfaction
- social worth

The Place—the environment and resources that are provided and developed. These include the following:

- ethos and culture
- physical space
- organization
- equipment

Creative Curriculum and Pedagogy

What is significant about these frameworks is the notion of interrelationships. We can only understand teaching for creativity if we consider it as part of a complex range of interdependent factors. There are implications for assessment and a need for a new assessment paradigm.

Rather than judging students by what they produce, the *relationships* between learners, teachers, and their environment should be assessed and analyzed in order to plan for future action and intervention. If we consider how students take risks, participate in critical reflection, remain open and flexible, use general and detailed knowledge, and make decisions, we can assess how students have engaged in the creative processes as they occur. In order to better understand how students are learning, we need to consider whether students are informed about the structure of the learning, have opportunities to negotiate criteria, and are supported in their work.

We need to consider the environment and relationships in the classroom in the same way. When we evaluate the particular atmosphere, the approaches employed, and the facilities, we can make better decisions about the creative learning environment. By looking at the partnerships and relationships that form in the classroom, we can see how relationships affect creative processes. We should acknowledge how students help each other to focus on the learning, how relationships encourage risk-taking, and how students support each other's expressions of ideas. We cannot assess a student unless we assess the pedagogy of the teacher and the learning environment being offered at the same time. The following cases illustrate this complexity in action.

A Case Study: The Potential of Animation in the Classroom

Rachael is an early childhood teacher who passionately believes in the importance of creativity in children's lives. She participated in a two-year research project with twelve other teachers exploring the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) with young children. It became apparent to her that although ICT had the potential to stimulate children's creativity, the software programs that were available were not facilitating the process. By chance she came upon a professional opportunity that enabled her to learn about how to create

animations and she realized its potential to act as a powerful narrative device by which children could create contexts for telling stories using new media.

A visit to an animation studio clarified for Rachael that animation was essentially about well-constructed narrative. She began an exploration of animation with her class and provided children with the opportunity to observe and critically reflect on animations they had encountered. She also allotted time for children to develop a foundational understanding of how the various technologies worked. The children played, experimented, and were given small teaching clinics on both the technical and narrative aspects of animation. The children also spent time talking about their ideas to each other and thinking about how the animation process could facilitate telling their story effectively. Rachael supported and guided them to find effective ways to communicate their ideas.

Prompted by their discussions, the children created a storyboard of their ideas together with a script. Both the storyboard and the script indicated features of the technology, such as camera angles, the placement of sound effects, and the use of voice-overs. Once Rachael taught the children the basic principles of visual design and camera work, they quickly increased control over equipment and the medium. The project created a need for learning new vocabulary (e.g., wide-shot, mid-shot, close-up, etc.), which was incorporated into the curriculum. The class also investigated how to combine a sequence of shots based on film-making principles. This newly gained expertise and knowledge provided children with the power to critique their own and others' work.

Rachael's classroom moved beyond other classrooms where the technical or foundational aspects of animation predominated. When only the foundational aspects are emphasized, the results are animations that are technically clever but not necessarily communicating a message of interest or worth in the eyes of the audience (neglect of some aspects of the human dimension).

The teamwork required during the creative process inevitably facilitated the development of such skills as communication, negotiation, decision making, time management, and general organization. Creativity is therefore not something that occurs in isolation from other learning. The children in Rachael's class exhibited many of the characteristics of creative people: curiosity, passion, drive, and confidence. They used their imagination to pursue purposeful goals and demonstrated tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty as they persisted with their tasks and identified ways forward when confronted with problems.

Importantly, Rachael created an environment where children could work in a sustained way when needed. For example, when one group of students were clearly working well and in the final stages of producing their animation, she allowed them to spend the better part of two days to complete it rather than be constrained by the timetable. Children as young as seven and eight years were able to sustain their concentration and perseverance.

Rachael encouraged learners in her class to believe in their own ideas and articulate back and forth between logic and imagination. Her own beliefs in children's creative and learning capacity meant that her expectations of what they were capable of doing were high. Consequently she created a learning environment where there was clear evidence of children feeling challenged by their goals and tasks, freely moving around and taking the initiative to find relevant

information, interacting with others, gaining support and encouragement from their teachers, and willingly put forward new ideas and alternative views. This is consistent with the research on creative learning environments and demonstrates how important both environment and pedagogy were in enabling children in Rachael's class to develop their creative capacity.

Links to Literacy

One of the reasons the animations produced by Rachael's students communicated powerfully with their audiences was because she went beyond the technical to emphasize a need to communicate something of worth. Creativity and multi-literacies are intrinsically linked if literacy is understood to involve the following dimensions: the human, the foundational, the critical, and the creative.

The *human* dimension of literacy is a reminder that literacy is not simply a technical endeavor. Literacy is shaped and influenced by individuals as they make sense of life experiences and communicate new knowledge. An individual's knowledge develops through experience, and the way an individual interprets experience changes. This growing knowledge includes not only discipline knowledge (e.g., Arts, Science), but also knowledge gained from other people, situations, and contexts. The communication of emotions is particularly evident in multiliterate practice when music is used to create a mood or feeling associated with a message.

The *foundational* dimension of literacy refers to the particular skills and knowledge that generally need to be directly taught, then practiced in order for students to become proficient. In schools, a huge emphasis has been placed on the development of skills associated with reading and writing and to a lesser degree, listening and speaking. The foundational skills associated with visual, aural, spatial, and gestural modes of communication do not receive that same emphasis and are more often addressed through specialized or elective subjects.

The *critical* dimension of literacy has serious implications for educators' pedagogy and the following series of questions arises:

- How do we examine the educational intentions of the tasks we set students? For example, are we aiming to simply engage students with technology or are we providing opportunities for genuine critical engagement?
- To what extent are students encouraged to use higher order thinking, develop deep understandings, and reflect on the content of their work?
- How well do we encourage students to identify the relevance of their work at a local and global level?
- To what extent are students able to reflect on the appropriateness of the mode of communication they have used to exhibit their knowledge and ideas?
- Is the learning environment designed physically, socially, and culturally to be a place where students regularly give and receive feedback?
- How much time is provided for students to revisit and reshape their initial ideas after discussion and feedback?

The quality of questions, scaffolding, and support that teachers provide to guide students' thinking contribute to how well the critical dimension of literacy is developed.

The *creative* dimension indicates where learners manipulate and reconstruct situations to make their experiences more meaningful. This involves the expression, testing, and elaboration of ideas as they take place. Other dimensions of literacy are adapted, adopted, and innovated for the individual's own purposes. Understanding how well other dimensions of literacy have been assimilated provides opportunities to assess creative literacy.

Future Directions

Creativity has long been valued in the early childhood sector, particularly by preschool teachers who are adept at creating curriculum that enables children to explore and develop their ideas. Creative approaches, in addition to being effective, also match calls for reform of teaching pedagogy. Students become engaged in novel ways and build a strong base of skills, techniques, knowledge, and understanding.

When teachers create an environment that fosters honesty of interaction, they also create an atmosphere for challenge. Teachers still have a strong role to play, as the early stages of the creative process often involve teachers articulating the challenge and engaging in direct teaching or modeling. Later, children draw on new and existing skills, knowledge, and understandings to develop their ideas and thinking. A curriculum that fosters creativity in the classroom encourages empathy and consideration of multiple perspectives, with a high premium also placed on communication and interpersonal skills.

Creative learning contexts need to foster a wide sense of student responsibility for learning. Students can identify what to do, organize their time, identify priorities, determine how best to approach tasks, and balance their commitments. Communication of ideas in multiple modes creates a demand for multiliteracies in learning and teaching. In examining creativity, a shift from evaluating isolated student achievement to using a new assessment paradigm that evaluates *relationships* is called for. This refers to *relationships* between teachers' pedagogy, the physical and cultural environment they create for students, and the learning or outcomes demonstrated by students. Considering the interplay of such relationships in assessment will enrich our understanding of how best to develop young children's creative capacity and improve our teaching practice.

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Maureen O'Rourke

Curriculum in Early Childhood

Overview

In Australia curriculum is developed and implemented at the level of states and territories. Attempts in the past two decades to develop a national curriculum for schools have been unsuccessful, and as a result, each state and territory government is solely responsible for the development and implementation of its' own regulatory frameworks for the curriculum. Each state and territory has agreed on a set of Key Learning Areas. Although the names for these may vary, the discipline areas remain common and refer to English, mathematics, science, the arts, technology, society and environment, health and physical education, and languages other than English. In this section I will refer specifically to the school curriculum for early childhood (kindergarten to year 3) since child care in Australia is regulated by a national accreditation scheme. The child-care sector does not usually adopt curriculum designed by education authorities although in some states child-care directors are required to be trained teachers. Most Kindergarten and preschool programs are offered free to children who are 3–5 years of age, although these programs are not compulsory and school (i.e., year 1) starting ages also vary, as they too are determined by individual states and territories.

Curriculum

The curriculum emphasis in each Australian state and territory differs, with a shift in recent years toward “essential learnings.” Essential learnings are a response to recognition of the need for a new curriculum paradigm, able to embrace multiliteracies, changing technological conditions and futures. Curriculum frameworks in the Northern Territory, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland reflect this shift in thinking toward essential learnings or the “new basics.” Queensland’s New Basics Framework also promotes multifaceted and authentic or “rich” tasks for assessment as an alternative to large scale testing (The State of Queensland Department of Education and the Arts, 2001). Baker, Trotter, and Holt (2003) note considerable diversity in the categorization of these essential learnings. While some frameworks regard essential learnings as curriculum itself, others describe them as a component part of curriculum.

Stages of Schooling

Within the frameworks there is a reliance on developmental continua to demarcate early, middle, and upper schooling into phases/bands or stages. Although these stages of schooling in fact attract slightly different names in each state and territory, the underlying principle of these levels is hierarchical and increasingly focuses on specialized rather than integrated knowledge. It is usually the case

that children of the same chronological age are grouped together in the same classroom. Multiage groupings often exist in small schools for reasons of administration rather than pedagogy while some larger schools have taken a multiage or family grouping approach for philosophical or pedagogical reasons.

There is policy provision for early entry to school for children of high ability and this is usually measured by an intelligence test that is administered, at the cost of families, by an independent psychologist. Equity is clearly an issue in the access to dominant cultural discourses and funds of knowledge that are tested. The actual provision of early entry to school has been very limited and many families have encountered considerable resistance from education authorities to early entry or differentiated curriculum in the early years. The social and emotional development of children is often cited as the major reason for not accelerating students of high ability (Senate Committee, 2001).

Outcomes and Standards Frameworks

In a climate of accountability and economic rationalism it is now the case that outcomes frameworks are used in all Australian schools. Each of these frameworks identifies a set of predetermined learning outcomes for all students although these also vary across jurisdictions in the type and scope of learning outcomes used. The outcomes are essentially curriculum organizers that emphasize observable student achievement using terms such as “compare,” “describe,” or “investigate.” They are not intended as assessment criteria (Baker, Trotter, and Holt, 2003). However, as Luke (1999) notes, “the multiple outcomes approach is ‘technocratic’” (p. 7) based on positivist principles and is potentially intellectually reductionist. It also deskills teachers and teacher professional learning communities. MacNaughton (2003) also notes that outcomes-based education and standardized testing disempower educators and perpetuate a conforming position in relation to curriculum in early childhood education.

National Benchmarking

National testing in literacy and numeracy is conducted with all students in year 3 (approximately 8-year-old children) and testing is again conducted nationally in tests during the school years 5 and 7. These tests are based on achievement targets identified by education authorities. These tests are decontextualized, standardized, and offer students a single opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understandings in a high-stakes curriculum area. Our concern with such approaches is informed by critical theory and a multiliteracies framework (Cope and Kalatzis, 2000) that recognize that many students undertaking such tests will be unable to demonstrate what they know and can do due to the Eurocentric cultural knowledge that is inherently valued and normalized within them.

Financing of Early Years Provision

The Australian Council of Deans of Education have identified that “prior to school education is probably the sector most in need of help in Australia . . . (it) remains seriously under funded” (2004, p. 47). The inadequate funding of prior to

school settings, insufficient remuneration of early years teachers, and increasing child/staff ratios have a negative impact on the types of programs offered in early childhood. In this climate it is difficult to imagine how the profession can adequately provide learning environments where children “are to develop into well rounded, competent, productive and socially responsible citizens” (p. 47).

Recent Research

The popular appeal of recent developments in brain research has contributed to a renewed emphasis on the significance of the environment in the early years. In particular, there is concern regarding the so-called “windows of opportunity” in early childhood being fully exploited in order to generate competent and productive adults. Curriculum in the early years emphasizes early education as a significant foundation for future development particularly in social, emotional, and physical well-being and the development of literacy and numeracy to be an economically “legitimate” citizen. The notions of “opportunity and investment” are closely linked to the now renowned RAND Corporation’s statement that \$1 spent in early childhood nets a \$7 return in the long term (RAND, 2005). Hopes expressed by politicians that Australia would be regarded internationally as a “clever country” have been fertile ground for conservatism that unapologetically declares Australia can no longer afford to carry the “warm bodies” draining our education, welfare, and justice systems (Smart Population Foundation, 2005).

Curriculum Approaches

Despite the mandatory nature of early childhood curriculum in Australia there are numerous philosophical approaches to programming at the “grassroots” level. Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett, and Farmer (2005) identify no less than sixteen approaches evident in Australian early childhood programs. Among these are models of early childhood education informed by developmentally appropriate practice, **behaviorism**, sociocultural theory, postmodern, poststructural, and critical theories. MacNaughton (2003) makes a crucial distinction among these approaches, identifying social justice and equity as crucial indicators for evaluating whether curriculum approaches perpetuate conforming, reforming, or transforming educational practices. MacNaughton’s model is a useful one for exploring the ways in which dominant cultural discourses shape the perspectives of race, ethnicity, class, culture, childhoods, and families that inform mandated curriculum frameworks and day-to-day, classroom-based curriculum decisions.

What Lies Ahead?

Redefining curriculum in Australia has begun in earnest (The State of Queensland, 2001; Luke, 1999; MacNaughton, 2003) and will continue to evolve, provided that a purposeful dialogue regarding identity, diversity, language, and a problematizing of what constitutes essential learnings in the knowledge era persists. The major threats to this dialogue are political conservatism, economic

rationalism, and the deprofessionalizing of educators through the development of a technocratic approach to curriculum in the early years of education.

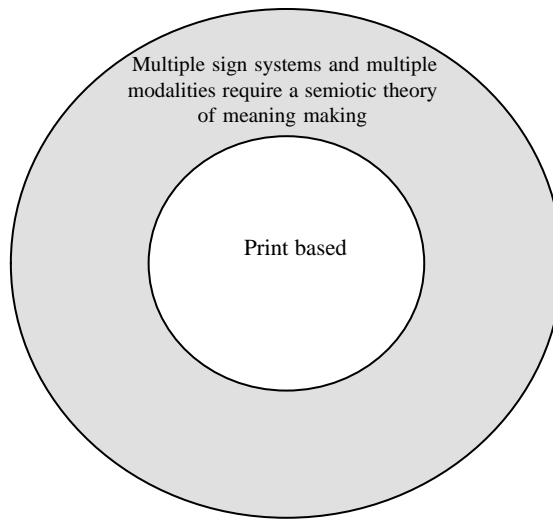
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Libby Lee

Multiliteracies

Now, more than ever, the lives of young children are saturated with multimedia, in the form of DVDs, CD-ROMs, computer games, digital music, e-mail, text messaging, and digital photography, to name just a few. This has required new thinking about the new forms of literacy. One of the ways that this rethinking has occurred has been encapsulated in the pedagogy of multiliteracies, which has expanded our view of reading, writing, speaking, and listening to include the various multimedia symbol forms. In this way computers are “symbol machines” that allow young children to negotiate a complex interplay of multiple sign systems (e.g., video clips, music, sound effects, icons, virtually rendered paint strokes, text in print-based documents), multiple modalities (e.g., linguistic, auditory, visual, artistic), and recursive communicative and cognitive processes (e.g., real time and virtual conversations, cutting/pasting text, manipulating graphics, importing photographs).

The term multiliteracies in fact covers what has also been regarded as electronic literacies, technoliteracies, digital literacies, visual literacies, and print-based literacies. To explore multiliteracies we require an understanding of semiotic theory to know how symbols, in the form of letters and words, drawings, icons of various types, photographs, colors, and animation movement can communicate meanings. Semiotics offer a wide lens to describe the ways in which meanings are made and goals accomplished using “semiotic resources” such as oral language, visual symbols, and music. As the figure shows below, emergent and early literacy is not simply a question of print-based versus electronic or digital literacies, but a consideration of the multimodal context of multiliteracies that makes it unique and relevant to contemporary early childhood education.



Multiliteracies incorporate print-based literacies

While being multiliterate is extremely relevant to the early childhood context, a review of the research into new technologies and early childhood by Lankshear and Knobel found a preponderance of the use of multimodal resources to promote decoding and encoding alphabetic texts. The authors claim there has been an underrealization of the potential of new technologies to orient children toward literacy futures that will be very different from those of the past. These authors also affirmed that the interrelated fields of new technologies and literacy in early childhood were radically underresearched when compared to other age-groups. Interestingly the authors contend that much new learning was occurring in out-of-school settings rather than in classroom settings. This review of research alerted Australian researchers to the need for involving teachers as researchers in exploring the possibilities of new learning and multiliteracies.





In other research into the integration of technology and literacy pedagogy Durrant and Green found that in various Australian states there has been an overly technical skills approach to integrating technology literacy pedagogy. This “skills orientation” was outside of an authentic context of situated social practice and at odds with social constructivist theories that underpin much of early childhood pedagogy. Durrant and Green’s research into digital literacies provided a conceptual framework known as the “3D” view of new literacy learning to bring together three dimensions—“operational,” “cultural,” and “critical”—that need to be addressed simultaneously to enable a holistic, cultural, and critical view of pedagogy.

Building on the work of these two research teams an Australian early childhood research project titled *Children of the New Millennium* involved twenty teacher-researchers exploring 4- to 8-year-old children’s knowledge and understanding of multiliteracies. In the first instance, the teachers and researchers undertook a “technotour” of children’s homes that revealed a high level of use of new technologies by children that was far greater than teachers had anticipated. In most cases the children had access to and could use information and communication technologies (ICT) far in advance of the equipment that existed in many of the

schools and preschools. Children were able to go online to websites that were often linked to their favorite television shows, use search engines to find information, and often played interactive games online and with game software. New ways of building on the skills and interests from home emerged when teachers engaged some children as coaches or mentors in the classroom and capitalized on children’s funds of knowledge by using similar software in school as at home. This was particularly so for children with special learning needs. The pedagogies of the teachers using new technologies were inquiry-based, and autonomous investigations and problem posing and solving were promoted. The multimedia software supported the creation of animations, movies, slideshows, and explorations of digital-still photography and video.

Situated practice—making learning meaningful and based on real-life experiences by focusing on children’s interests and understandings—was highlighted in the learning stories compiled by the teacher-researchers. The teachers commented on the need for authentic, real life, purposeful engagements in early childhood settings because children at home were able to quickly locate an enormous amount of resources and material through the use of the information-rich Internet. Teachers wrote that the visual aspect of the Internet was a valuable tool to further enhance young children’s understanding of their world.

A framework for mapping the depth and complexity of young children’s learning with multiliteracies was developed by the teacher-researchers. The four inter-related dimensions provided a lens for teachers to analyze what children know about multiliteracies and helped reveal the next steps in planning for learning.

<p>Functional user</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Locating, code breaking, using signs and icons ◆ Selecting and operating equipment ◆ Moving between mediums: cameras, videos, computers 	<p>Meaning maker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Understanding multimodal meanings ◆ Purpose of text and text form ◆ Connecting to prior knowledge 
<p>Critical analyzer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Discourse analysis ◆ Equity ◆ Power and position ◆ Appropriate software / hardware 	<p>Transformer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Using skills and knowledge in new ways ◆ Designing texts ◆ Producing new texts 

The multiliteracies map (Hill, 2005)

The teacher-researchers found that children thrived on generating new multimodal texts and this led to the need to understand principles of multimodal meanings. For example, the use of graphics and story-making software encouraged communication and other emergent literacy behaviors as well as enhanced interpersonal interactions among learners. The electronic books in various software programs supported the development of children's readings and rereadings and this was particularly evident with children with special needs. The use of electronic multimedia options opened up an interactive world that can support children's literacy development in a digital world and provide them with stories that may be beyond their reading level.

Projects such as *Children of the New Millennium* have shown that children as young as 3 and 4 years of age can represent meaning with digital photographs about their learning, can play with these photographs; importing them into slide shows, changing the layout, the colors, and the shape. They can make books with photographs and their own artwork using myriad of colors and backgrounds, and this can have audio voice and sound effects and animation added to it. The project has also revealed that the traditional content of reading and writing needs to be broadened to include the use of multiple-sign systems that represent meaning. Children in early childhood have always used construction, drawing or illustrations, movement, and sound to represent meaning. The newer multimodal technologies merely add to children's choice of medium to represent ideas and to comprehend the meanings in a range of texts.

Indeed, as an example of how quickly the concept of multiliteracies has taken hold over the past three years, most Australian state departments of education have embraced the concept of multiliteracies. Education of Queensland and the South Australian Department of Education promote literacy learning in the context of the pedagogy of multiliteracies and encourage teachers to create contexts for learning that are multimodal and incorporate the use of new technologies where appropriate.

Very quickly, over the past five years it has become evident that digital literacies and print-based literacy are not oppositional concepts. Both are required for effective functioning in the twenty-first century. In fact traditional print-based reading and writing was found to be vitally important for success in digital contexts. Writing was significantly important as a memory tool, for planning, designing, and recording ideas and information. Reading was critically important for predicting, scanning, interpreting, analyzing, and selecting from the abundance of information. Interestingly, in *Children of the New Millennium*, the children switched effortlessly between genres, scanning material for information, following procedures, searching by scrolling through menus, and interpreting icons and written instructions on tool bars. In other words, although reading, writing, listening, and speaking are paramount, today's students must be able to do more, as they decipher, code-break, achieve meaning, and express ideas through a range of media incorporating design, layout, color, graphics, and animation.

In fact, learning to critique the digital media, and consider whether the information is appropriate or accurate, is far more important than ever before considering the amount of time children are engaged with the screen. For many children

preschool and school is the only place where they can learn to question the values and intentions of the many software programs and numerous websites. Teachers have commented about the need for practical examples of strategies they can use to support children to develop a critical orientation to multiliteracies.

It is clear that more research is needed into the long-term effects of prolonged use of screen-based learning. Children as young as 2 and 3 years of age are choosing to play with computers for long periods of time at home; in some learning stories teachers wrote of children whose main leisure activity at home was playing with the computer for extensive periods without adult supervision. Add to this long periods of screen-based learning at school, and the length of time interacting with the screen is significant. Long-term use may affect children's health, social and communicative abilities, and thought processes.

Further research into multiliteracies in early childhood education is important because technological change is increasingly defining the nature of literacy. Reading and writing will become even more important in the future due to the increasing need for acquiring and communicating information rapidly in a world of global competition and information economies. We live in a time where speed of information is central to success and reading and writing proficiency will be even more critical to our children's futures.

There has been a plethora of research regarding the impact of television on children. However, the Internet, as a source of information, education, and entertainment, is set to have a far greater impact on the lives and learning of young children than television. It is essential for us to consider the following questions: How will interactive game-based entertainment affect children's play and learning? How will new technologies transform children's dispositions or "habitus", or ways of thinking? As children play, think, and learn, this learning becomes internalized as structures, schemas, or ways of thinking that can be used in other contexts. How will the increasing engagement with multimodal literacies change the ways children think and learn? New technologies have already transformed the lives of young children in their home and informal learning contexts—such questions will be vital if we are to have an education system that is meaningful and relevant to the lives of young children in the twenty-first century. Becoming multiliterate is viewed as being an essential part of successful learning for these new times.

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Numeracy: An Australian View

In the context of Australian education mathematics is generally regarded as the knowledge and skills base for the discipline, and the term *numeracy* relates to the application of this knowledge and skills in authentic or real-world contexts. As such the importance of developing a numerate populace who can function effectively with the practical mathematical demands of everyday life in the twenty-first century has been recognized in the Australian context. In fact, there is recognition that the process of becoming numerate is ongoing and the years from birth to eight years of age represent an age of unparalleled growth when the foundations of skills and concepts are established. It also represents a time of opportunity to develop positive attitudes towards mathematics and the ways in which it can contribute to everyday life in a variety of ways. It has become evident that children use mathematical ideas and processes in the years before they attend school in a number of informal ways. They develop understandings about money when shopping and about time as they embark on journeys in the family car, or on trains. Such informal learning contexts are enriched when parents or caregivers support the learning via reading stories, highlighting real world applications involving numeracy concepts and making links between numeracy and play activities. However, much of this support will be intuitive and we need to be clear about the importance of the early childhood years for later development and the ways in which we as parents and educators can support the foundations of numeracy in a variety of contexts.

It has now become apparent that new demands in the high-performance workplace mean that a traditional view of mathematics which focused on memorization, rote learning, and knowing facts devoid of context and application has been replaced with one in which mathematics has some purpose and application, and where becoming numerate is conceptualized in a broad way. Such a vision considers mathematics and becoming numerate in the context of societal and individual expectations. This vision has been accompanied with a shift in pedagogy which emphasizes the use of both whole class and small group teaching, active exploration, inquiry and problem solving, engagement with mathematical ideas via collaborations and creative explorations, mathematical representations incorporating a variety of media which include the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), and the communication of findings with peers and authentic audiences.

Environments that Promote Numeracy Learning

The importance of a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy was epitomized in Australia in the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the twenty-first century, which stated the following:

Students should have attained the skills of numeracy and English literacy; such that, every student should be numerate, be able to read, write and spell and communicate at an appropriate level.

Such a vision has implications for the organization of teaching and learning opportunities in mathematics that will enable children to become numerate or mathematically literate in Australia. The *Numeracy for All Report* recognized that “No single approach to teaching numeracy will be effective for all learners,” but declared that it was a major policy objective that students should attain strong foundations in literacy and numeracy in the early childhood years, so that key enabling skills for achieving success in schooling could be achieved. In 1999 Perry noted the importance of early learners being confident about their ability to solve problems mathematically and being challenged and engaged to create opportunities to use and extend their existing skills. He also stated that since children actively construct their own knowledge they should be able to learn in a variety of contexts and ways that are characterized by play, talking about their discoveries and strategies, and working with others in collaborative ways. He stressed the importance of teachers and parents working in partnerships to support student learning since this was a major factor that influenced effective learning in the early years.

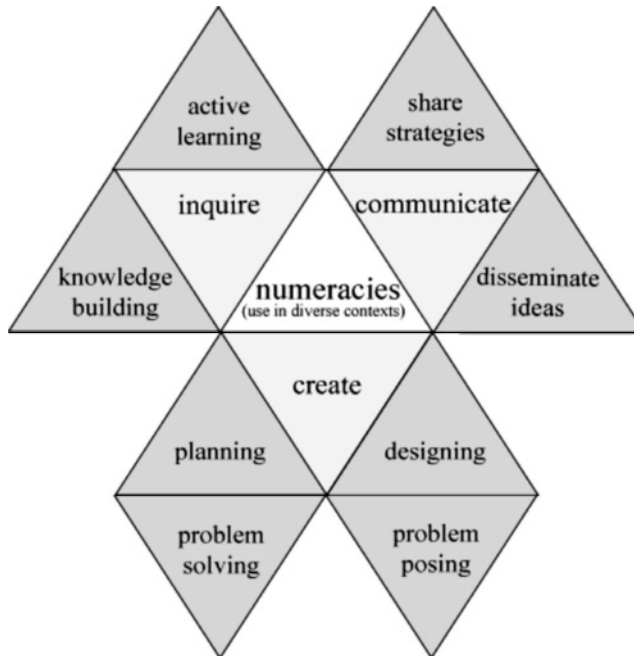
Because of the high priority placed by the government on attaining numeracy for all students in Australian schools the various states created mathematics programs that were designed to create contexts in which children could develop skills which they could utilize in real-world contexts, and thus provide contexts for becoming numerate in new and dynamic ways. These have included the following:

- Count me in (New South Wales)
- The early years numeracy project (Victoria)
- First steps to numeracy (Western Australia)

Additionally, benchmarks for mathematical achievement were developed to ensure that it was possible to measure if such programs were successful in reaching their objectives. The programs initiated in each of the states not only focused on student attainment but also recognized that teachers needed professional development and additional support in their classrooms if outcomes in numeracy were to be achieved. The early years numeracy interview, which is part of the project in Victoria, is, for example, conducted on a one-to-one basis and provides teachers with rich data about the knowledge and abilities of young children with regard to their mathematical ability. Evaluations of the program have indicated that teachers feel more confident about their skills in mathematics as a result of their participation in the project, and that they were able to teach more effectively to improve outcomes for the children in their class.

In a recent study, Yelland and her colleagues have illustrated the ways in which young children may become numerate in the information age. They suggest a new view of numeracy that allows for the application of mathematical skills in a diverse range of contexts. Thus, to become numerate young children should have the opportunity to participate in both problem solving and problem posing in authentic contexts. This involves a model of learning that is active and related to engagement, with ideas that have meaning for the child so that they can build new understandings. This has meant moving beyond a basic use of mathematical skills for problem solving. It incorporates a model (see figure) that involves inquiry,

communication, and the generation of new knowledge as well as the application of knowledge in a variety of authentic contexts. Further, it is asserted that there is a fundamental link between the ability to become numerate and the skills and knowledge base that children require to function effectively.



Numeracies for the twenty-first Century

These are based in tasks that children engage with in schools and it is suggested that these range on a continuum from unidimensional to multidimensional, which directly relate to the skills base and application that children need to draw upon to demonstrate a capacity to become numerate. Unidimensional tasks were simple sequences of activity that usually had a single outcome, and were often used as an introduction to concepts and processes. The pace of activity was largely related to the ability of the whole group yet the tasks were completed individually by each child in the class. An example would be when a teacher is teaching the concept of “doubling” to 5-year-olds and asks them to represent numbers by drawing squares and writing the addition equation (e.g., $5 + 5 = 10$) underneath their drawing.

Multidimensional tasks, in contrast, were generally build on these basic tasks in a significant way and consisted of integrated investigations in which skills and concepts were used in innovative ways to solve authentic problems which often could not be categorized into traditional subject areas of the curriculum. An essential element in completing such investigations was the opportunity to communicate ideas and discuss concepts and issues that were an inherent part of authentic problem posing and solving during multidimensional tasks or investigations. For example, the children might plan and create a garden in their center or school. They mapped the garden beds that had already been planted, and decided

what new plants and areas could further enhance these gardens based on various ideas from the collaborative group. The children then measured, mapped, and drew the gardens so that they could purchase and plant the new vegetation. The types of gardens included: “A Grasses Garden,” the “Entrance Garden,” a “Pea Garden,” and a “Bird Garden.” The children then organized a “working bee” of volunteer parents and community members to assist them in the building process.

Conclusions

In Australia, the importance of becoming numerate has been given a high priority by both Commonwealth and state governments who have become increasingly concerned with being able to measure outcomes in simple ways to demonstrate that their policies have been effective in raising standards in our schools. However, it is apparent that such conceptualizations of numeracy are intrinsically linked to traditional views of mathematics that focus on skill and knowledge acquisition which can be easily assessed in pencil and paper tests. It has also been suggested that new conceptualizations of numeracy are needed for the twenty-first century which provide contexts in which young children are able to inquire and generate their own investigations and create new knowledge which can be shared and communicated to others using new technologies. In this way mathematics and numeracy teaching and learning contexts are utilizing new pedagogies that promote such types of learning, and innovative programs in each of the states have been implemented to ensure that young children have the opportunity to learn and use such skills and knowledge and build on them in the later years of schooling.

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Gender and Equity in Australia

Gender equity is a broad and politically charged term, holding different meanings for different groups of teachers, parents, administrators, and policy makers. In Australia, the concept of equity recognizes that the historical inequities of children from different social groups (gender, race, sexuality, and class) exist and that groups of children do not enter early childhood services from a level playing field. A number of social factors, including gender, are often associated with reduced access and participation in schooling. Gender equity also recognizes that different gender relationships of power and privilege exist within educational settings and society. Gender equity does not imply equality of treatment to girls and boys, as there are many factors that may disadvantage children in achieving equitable outcomes. Therefore, curriculum, teaching strategies, and policies created from a gender equity perspective favor those children who have been discriminated against or marginalized. Until recently, most policy and research on gender and education focused on girls and girls' issues. Currently, there has been a growing shift toward examining boys' education, debating how boys can, do, and should fit into gender equity programs.

Theoretical Perspectives

In Australia, the field of early childhood education has taken the ideas and concepts of gender equity seriously, and for over a decade has been using alternative theoretical perspectives to explore how gender is constructed. The gender research conducted in early childhood settings, by Davies, Yelland, MacNaughton, and Taylor and Richardson, challenges traditional understandings of gender, uncovering the subtle processes by which children actively construct themselves as girls and boys. This research sheds light on the need for early childhood teachers to understand the part that children play in the construction of gender. What makes the gender research conducted in Australia unique is how these scholars are drawing from postmodern perspectives to conceptualize gender in early childhood settings. For example, Davies, Yelland, and Mac Naughton all use feminist poststructuralist understandings of subjectivity, discourse, agency, resistance, and power-knowledge regimes to analyze gender relations and social interactions of young children. Richardson and Taylor expand on these ideas by using queer theory to comprehend gender further.

Findings from these studies about gender depart from the Western cultural assumption that gender is biologically or socially determined. Instead, gender is seen as a social, cultural, historical, and political construct, recognizing the active part that children take in the social construction and reconstruction of their gender identities. For example, Davies' groundbreaking work (originally done in 1989) was the first Australian study in early childhood to use feminist poststructuralism as a means for critiquing mainstream understandings of gender. Her work shows the possibilities of feminist poststructuralism for understanding children's gender differently by exploring how children construct their gender identities. She shows how children position themselves conceptually, physically, and emotionally as male or female in the classroom. Feminist poststructuralism

is used to analyze how children maintain and resist the male–female binary. According to Davies, gender equity will not be achieved until children are given access to new gender discourses, which open up new and multiple ways of being gendered.

Theory in Practice

MacNaughton's (2000) action research project with twelve early childhood teachers shows how feminist poststructuralist ideas about gender might be practical in early childhood for exploring how young children learn and live their gendered identities. This work shows the possibilities for teachers to transform the traditions of early childhood curriculum by seeing and understanding gender from a feminist poststructuralist perspective. This requires early childhood teachers to conduct different kinds of observations in order to uncover the gender dynamics between children. Rather than looking simply at individual children's behavior, which only reinforces gender differences, teachers should look for patterns in how girls and boys relate to each other, attempting to find out what kinds of power relations exist between children and groups of children. Recognizing the power relations and gender dynamics that exist in the classroom enables teachers to challenge inequitable gender relations. Working towards gender equity is not only done by recognizing children's talk and actions in the classroom and reviewing the curriculum resources, materials, and goals, but it also includes challenging these inequities in practice. Change in children's gendered behaviors will most likely occur through teachers' efforts at inventing new gender discourses for children to access and explore.

Yelland's (1998) edited book, *Gender in Early Childhood* presents gender research done by various early childhood researchers in Australia. The studies presented in this book all draw upon contemporary understandings of gender. A variety of perspectives that influence gender are considered, including the family, community, and society as contexts for how gender is enacted in the everyday lives of young children. Several studies also explore the role of the school and its relation to the construction of gender and gender expectations.

New gender research conducted by Taylor and Richardson is building on these feminist poststructuralist understandings of gender by using queer theory to problematize gender further. These researchers look at how gender norms are being contested and defended by young children in the early childhood classroom. By critically analyzing heterosexuality and its position in the social construction of gender, the heterocentrism of developmentally appropriate practices becomes evident. This study shows how children's space in the early childhood curriculum is gendered and how children's gendered identities are spatialized. By viewing children's play at the home corner from a queer perspective, Taylor and Richardson show how new opportunities can be created in the curriculum for young children to challenge and transcend gender norms. This research also highlights the fluidity of gender and the various ways that children position themselves strategically in the classroom as different kinds of girls and boys. This work challenges the field of early childhood education to continue exploring gender in radical ways, in hopes of transcending gender inequities.

The scholarship of these researchers recognizes the importance of the structures and processes of the social world and the impact these have on children and their capacity to take an active part in the construction of gender.

Impacts on Curricula and Policies

These contemporary understandings of gender have begun to influence early childhood curriculum and policies for gender equity in Australia. For instance, most current Australian state-based early childhood curricula identify the preschool years as significant to young children's identity formation and make the identity of the young child as a future learner and citizen a key responsibility of early childhood teachers. Gender is seen as an important facet of young children's identity, and these curriculum frameworks are recognizing how the active role that children take constructing and reconstructing their gender identity can limit their learning and produce unjust classroom relationships. As a concept of social justice, gender equity recognizes that gender issues do impact on children, the classroom, and society.

Although gender equity policies do not flourish in the early childhood sector, when compared to primary and secondary education, Early Childhood Australia does have a Policy on Gender Equity. This policy states the following: "All children have an equal right to life opportunities that promote well being and support their development in all areas. Comprehensive knowledge about both societal and structural inequity based on gender should be understood and responded to in a manner that does not further promote gender discrimination." It is evident that the research discussed earlier has influenced this policy in that gender is conceptualized throughout the document as a social, cultural, historical, and political construction. Not only does the policy recognize the importance of gender for girls and boys, believing it to be an all-pervasive and ever-present factor for all children, but it also sees sexuality as a significant aspect of identity. This policy highlights the vital role that early childhood settings play in the development of a range of femininities and masculinities through children's relationships with peers, teachers, the classroom culture, and curriculum. This policy also implies that the role of the teacher is vital in promoting gender equity as it positions the teacher as an interventionist, ensuring that gender bias is identified and challenged in the classroom.

The state of current gender understandings is a direct result of the impact of 1970's feminism on government and society in Australia. This movement has made huge gains in transforming the lives of women. Although these improvements are often under threat, they have been significant toward influencing early childhood gender research, curriculum, and policies in Australia.

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Learning and Assessment

Camp Kilda (CK) is regarded as being a quality early childhood center, and has many features you would typically expect to see in settings across Australia. The children are busily engaged in hands-on activity, playing indoors and outdoors, in the sandpit, under the shade of a big mango tree. The learning environment is planned to offer a variety of activities, including dramatic play, climbing equipment, balls, painting, drawing, clay, books, blocks, writing materials, scissors, manipulative materials. The children are free to access all the materials, and they play either individually or in small groups. The teachers encourage and stimulate the children's learning, through interactions and thoughtful planning. Learning and assessment at CK is embedded within the cultural and social contexts of the children and their community. Children's learning is made visible through a rich variety of strategies, including recorded observations, work samples, photographs, and other artifacts. Parents are actively encouraged to build on these "stories" of their children. Planning is based around the teachers' analysis of the information they gather daily as they interact with the children and their families.

Introduction

Like most Australian early childhood educators, the CK teachers subscribe to the theories that young children learn best through play. Play-based programs are widely supported in initial teacher training and the literature, although they vary widely in application and in assumptions made about the type and place of play in learning. It is the kind of pedagogy in place that is an important factor. The teacher's role in supporting learning generates varied child learning outcomes.

There is no national core curriculum for the early years in Australia but increasingly government initiatives at a federal level are calling for the introduction of a national standardized curriculum. Education is organized on a state-by-state basis and, as in many areas of Australian life, the states vigorously resist most moves for federal intervention. This results in a flexibility and range of differences across the programming and services available to young children and their families. For instance, across Australia, the starting age for formal schooling varies. Broadly, approaches to learning and assessment are distinctive to three stages in the early years: infants and toddlers (generally birth to 2 years), preschool (3–5), and early primary school (6–8). There is general agreement that identifying and building on children's interests and maintaining informal approaches is of primary importance, and various models for curriculum are embraced, including child-centered, Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), antibias, emergent, and inquiry-based learning.

All early childhood workers who are involved in the planning of young children's programs are professionally qualified with at least two years of tertiary training, and preschool and early primary teachers hold university degrees. Compartmentalizing curricula that separates learning into distinct domains and lessons for mastery is viewed as problematic in regard to young children's development and learning. In their initial training, early childhood educators are urged to plan for learning that is holistic, play-based, active, hands-on, in a planned and

supportive environment, with a strong developmental framework, and taking into account the cultural and social contexts.

In recognition of the complexities of learning, assessment is through congruently multiple and holistic methods. Teachers build a rich picture of each child, combining strategies such as using the traditional tools of child study (for example, observations, anecdotal records, checklists) with newer documentation technologies such as photos, portfolios, and recorded conversations. These rich data provide them with opportunities for reflection and analysis, which, in turn, informs their planning for further learning.

Learning and assessment in the early years are coming under increasing social and political scrutiny. Brain research is currently enjoying a high profile, with its advocacy for early intervention. The rapidly expanding child-care sector is having both social and economic impact. Corporate and managerial models of organization are being overlaid onto education. The rhetoric makes for an interesting mix with calls for the recognition of the necessity for lifelong learning and creativity, ironically juxtaposed with calls for getting “back to basics,” standardized testing, and a lamenting of a so-called “drop in standards” of literacy and numeracy. Along with calls for accountability, performance indicators, benchmarks, outcomes and standards, economic rationalizations question how the education dollar is spent, what is the product, who is the client, and what evidence is available to demonstrate positive outcomes. The high level of professionalism in early childhood educators has contributed to their ability to resist the increasing pressure for a more academic approach to learning and assessment, but they are being called on to find new ways to convince others of the worth of their educational approach.

In this situation, the discursive construction of play both enables and constrains. While the idea of facilitating children’s learning through exploration and discovery is enduringly attractive, for some educators, this has been interpreted as a *laissez faire* hands-off role for the teacher, which is a misreading of the principles for active learning and child-centered practice. Teachers will variously describe their work as guiding, facilitating, supporting, directing, scaffolding, being reluctant to use the word *teach* when describing the ways they work with children. Their understanding of child-centeredness does not permit them to take the position of teacher; rather, they strive to *teach without teaching*. There is a variety of nomenclature for staff in early childhood settings, for example, directors, group leaders, carers, assistants, teachers. In this entry all staff who work with young children in supporting their learning are referred to as teachers.

Palimpsest

A second reading of the CK center can build a palimpsest, locating traces of any number of influences, a mix of some of the enduring traditional approaches, as well as the more recent thinking about learning and assessment.

Infants and toddlers—long day care. For the youngest children at CK, the interface between education and care for this age-group shapes approaches to learning and assessment. In the rapidly expanding child-care sector, standards vary widely, but at CK the infants and toddlers are seen as actively learning about their world

through interactions and explorations. Proactive adults with a sound knowledge of young children and high expectations of their capacity make a positive difference to their learning. They support the babies in their sensory, perceptual, and motor development. The teachers bring an awareness of the expected patterns of growth and development, balanced with knowledge of each individual child, and their social and cultural contexts.

Planning for this age-group is not a matter of teacher-initiated “activities.” Rather, routine times, such as nappy (diaper) changing, are considered as learning opportunities, through one-to-one language experiences, music, and interactions. The teachers listen and respond to the children, develop communication skills through modeling and immersion, play games with them, and tend to their physical and emotional needs in a relationship of mutual respect and trust. The children are supported in the reaching of developmental milestones. Their cognitive development, creativity, and divergent thinking are all appreciated and encouraged. Planning is individually based, and directly relevant to the individual’s needs.

While there is no mandated curriculum, as such, for this age-group, the child-care sector is accountable to a national accreditation system. This applies to all long day-care centers, and CK’s continuing funding is tied to satisfactorily meeting the principles (e.g., *Staff interact with children to stimulate their curiosity and thinking*). Like all such standardizing devices, meeting all these principles sets only minimal standards for quality.

Along with this checklist as a tool for assessment of their program, teachers at Camp Kilda employ authentic forms of assessment daily, in order to inform their planning and improve the teaching and learning. They see the child as rich and competent, and they gather information and evidence of the children’s needs, interests, strengths, abilities, and achievements. They monitor children’s growth and development and learning through the use of traditional tools of child study, including observations, anecdotal records, and checklists. They use photography and other newer technologies for documentation. This “story-building” is shared with the children themselves, and their parents and families. The teachers use this pedagogical documentation as a reflective tool for themselves and their colleagues, to trace children’s thinking and communication.

Preschool—3- to 5-year-olds. The teachers at CK work at helping children to become decision makers, critical thinkers, problem solvers, theorists. The processes of doing and talking to clarify thinking, are seen as integral to children’s learning and development. Children’s curiosity and the questions they ask provide a key to learning about children’s understandings and learning processes. Basic understandings are constructed by children through self-directed problem solving.

In the process of co-constructing meaning, teachers act as co-players, co-learners, co-artists. Art as a language is considered an important means through which the children can make their learning visible. The children are invited to draw, paint, and construct daily. They are given instruction in skills and techniques when required, they visit the art gallery in their local community, a dance specialist works with each group weekly, and artists are frequently invited to visit the center. The children’s artwork has also been hung in the local gallery, and these close connections with the community help to make learning purposeful.

Each state has developed its own curriculum guidelines for this age-group, but they share many commonalities. Learning programs for children of this age are child-centered and holistic, with an emphasis on developing thinking and communicating skills. In response to political pressure, literacy and numeracy are emphasized, along with recognition of the importance of learning social skills and understandings. Learning through play is in the foreground. There are those who critique “play-based” learning, and compare this unfavorably with “knowledge-based” learning. Others insist that the two are not oppositional.

Assessment is not considered as being the sole purpose, or even the main goal of teaching and learning but, rather, is relative, cultural, and dynamic. Teachers employ multiple strategies for assessing the diversity of children’s abilities and strengths, taking into account the cultural, social, and family contexts for learning. As with the younger children, strategies for assessment can include observations, anecdotal records, running records, some checklists and diagnostic tests, photographs, portfolios, work samples, recorded conversations, and other artifacts. At CK, this pedagogical documentation is shared daily and openly with parents.

Early Primary—5–8 Years. In the January that they have turned five, the children from CK leave and go on to a primary school. Although the starting age differs from state to state, you can expect a general “look” to these learning environments. Most children wear school uniforms; the daily timetable separates “learning” from “play”; classrooms usually accommodate each child with a desk and chair.

Teachers in the early primary years all have a university degree, and they are accountable to a state-mandated curriculum, which is organized hierarchically around the traditional key learning areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society, Health, Arts, and so on. While the syllabus documents are mandated, they are outcomes based, and teachers have a certain degree of autonomy to implement the curriculum according to what they consider is the best way to meet the outcomes. Many early childhood educators working in the early years of primary schooling bring with them an appreciation of the role of play in children’s learning, and build this into their programming.

There is an increasing interest in interdisciplinary approaches to learning at this level, and the rhetoric, at least, recognizes the place of active and purposeful learning. As in the preschool settings, there is much variation and flexibility in how learning and assessment is enacted across settings. But a quality early primary classroom would see the children engaged in purposeful and active learning, across the disciplines. Integrating devices vary, but might be through a thematic approach, or through projects or “rich tasks.” In general, it would be safe to say that teacher-initiated activity is predominant.

National standardized testing has been introduced for the third, fifth, and seventh years of primary schooling, with a strong political interest in levels of literacy and numeracy. Results are compared across states, and influence policy-makers. This places downward pressure on the earlier primary years, where formal assessment is required. Commonly, this takes the form of mapping individual children against indicators of outcomes, organized on a developmental continuum. Parents receive a written report, and are also invited to an interview with their child’s teacher. Some teachers in the early primary years, committed to the principles of

child-centered learning, also use the broader range of assessment strategies, such as observations, portfolios, and other forms of pedagogical documentation.

Conclusion

Early childhood teachers in Australia are increasingly called on to resist the downward pressure for a more academic approach to teaching and learning, and they strive to advocate for young children through making their learning visible. When you walk into the CK center, you see and hear busy, happy children, who are viewed as rich and competent beings in the now. Their teachers are actively engaged with them in the co-construction of meaning, encouraging their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They do this through their interactions, and through planning a dynamic learning environment, in thoughtful response to their daily assessments of the children's strengths, abilities, and needs.

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Felicity McArdle

Brazil

Early Childhood Education in Brazil

Introduction

In Brazil, early childhood education is conceived as attendance in *crèches* (day-care centers for infants and toddlers) and preschool for children of up to 6 years of age, prior to eight years of compulsory elementary education.

Brazilian early childhood education (ECE) initiatives date back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but only in the second half of the twentieth century did day-care centers and preschools undergo a significant expansion in the country. In the beginning of the twentieth century the few existing day-care centers were characterized as a charitable initiative, and it wasn't until the 1940s that child care became the norm, although even then services were very limited and with strong health orientation. In 1942, the Consolidation of the Labor Laws defined the care of lactating children of working mothers as the duty of the companies. Within the school system preprimary education arose as an addition to state establishment of compulsory primary education and also emerged in private institutions.

In the mid-1970s and the 1980s, the federal government instituted initiatives within two sectors, the Brazilian Legion of Assistance (LBA) and the Ministry of Education (MEC), aimed at expanding admission, especially to children of low-income families. The MEC supported the states and municipalities both technically and financially in the expansion of preprimary education provision, on a part-time basis, giving priority to the age-group closest to 7 years (the beginning of compulsory school education). The LBA used a strategy of contracts with community and philanthropic institutions and with local municipalities to cater to children between 0 and 6 years of age, on a full-time or part-time basis, providing a subsidy per child that only partially covered admission costs. The expansion that occurred in this period was due in great part to the utilization of local community and nonqualified human resources, resulting in low quality services, in which the primary goal was to compensate for the effects of poverty. UNESCO and UNICEF played influential policy roles. This two-pronged insertion of ECE institutions into

both education and social welfare constituted a remarkable aspect of the history of Brazilian ECE, resulting in clashes between the sectors not as yet overcome.

In the mid-1980s the social movements in defense of rights, including the right to education in day-care centers and preschools, had an important effect, highlighted in this case by the women's movements. The decade ended with the proclamation of the new Brazilian Constitution (1988). Admission in day-care centers and preschools of children from zero to six is recognized in the constitution as an educational responsibility of the state (Art.208) as is the social right of the urban and rural workers to free attendance of their dependent children of up to 6 years of age in day-care centers and preschools (Art.7, XXV). However, this last article has not been implemented yet, perhaps due to recent reductions in labor rights.

The early 1990s were marked by several Education Ministry initiatives. Experts and educational administrators discussed national policy proposals that would meet the constitutional purposes, especially regarding the recognition of day-care centers as part of education. MEC documents laid out the conception of ECE as the first phase of basic education, extending from birth to six years, in which the functions of educating and caring for the children must be carried out in an integrated manner. The terms day-care center and preschool were redefined, in order to differentiate two age brackets (day care, for children up to 3 years of age, and preschool for those between four and six), with both having to present adequate quality standards. During this period, the Legislature discussed the proposed Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), which was finally approved in 1996. However, the implementation of these legal advances has encountered obstacles resulting from the absence of adequate financing mechanisms.

Despite great difficulties, ECE expanded in the decade of the 90s. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2003), 11.7 percent of children from 0 to 3 years of age and 68.4 percent of those between 4 and 6 attended ECE programs. Almost 70 percent of these places are provided by the local municipalities.

Organization and Coordination of Services

Early childhood education is part of a complex educational structure in which the Union, the twenty-six states, the Federal District, and the 5,560 municipalities each have their own responsibilities at specific levels of education. It is up to the municipalities to provide ECE and, together with the states, the compulsory elementary education. The states are also responsible for providing the high school education. The Union, in addition to maintaining a network of institutions of higher education, is responsible for the coordination of national policy, articulating the different levels and systems and exerting a normative, redistributive, and supplemental function in relation to the other jurisdictions.

The institutions that provide ECE shall have their functional operation authorized and supervised by the educational system of the respective municipality, or by the state jurisdiction when the municipality opts to belong to the state system. Although the law emphasizes that the functions of caring and educating should be inseparable in ECE, stressing a child's overall development, many institutions

still limit themselves to caring for the child and custodial care routines, while others emphasize preparation for elementary school.

Following international trends, in 2006 the National Congress approved a law that included 6-year-old children in elementary education nationwide, thereby extending the period of compulsory schooling from 8 to 9 years. As a result, ECE will cover the 0–5 age range.

Brazilian ECE policy guidelines are grounded in the Law of 1996 and the National Educational Plan of 2001. The Law defines ECE as the first phase of basic education, whose objective is the integral development of the child of up to 6 years of age through provision of day-care centers and preschools. The Law establishes that the evaluation of this educational phase be focused on development and cannot have the goal of assessing and measuring the learning of the child as a means of promotion to elementary school.

The 1996 Law also assigned the responsibility for providing ECE to the Municipalities and specified a period of three years for the day-care centers and the preschools to integrate themselves to the educational systems.

The National Council on Education (CNE) and the State and Municipal Councils on Education issued complementary laws. The regulatory challenge is considerable, especially because prior to the 1996 Law ECE did not have the status of a phase of education, and its history in the educational system did not include day-care centers. Difficulties also arise from the fact that ECE is assigned to the Municipalities, the majority of which suffer from precarious technical, political, and financial conditions.

The National Educational Plan establishes goals and objectives for ECE that include aspects like the national coverage of day-care centers and preschools, the definition of quality standards, and the implementation of actions for the initial and ongoing teacher preparation and training. The goal for 2011 is to have 50 percent of the children from zero to three and 80 percent of the children between four and five enrolled in ECE institutions. Those of 6 years of age should all be in primary school.

Financing

One of the main obstacles to the implementation of the expansion and the improvement in quality objectives foreseen in ECE is found in the pattern of financing Brazilian education. The Constitution determines the distribution of public revenue (taxes and social contributions) received in the three levels of the government for the financing of education. Since 1998, however, 60 percent of these state and municipal resources have been placed in a special fund, FUNDEF, in each state to finance compulsory elementary school. Thus ECE is forced to compete with other educational expenses for municipal resources not assigned to this fund. The situation is especially grave in those municipalities where local revenues are very low. Although the Union has responsibility for supplementing the resources of the municipal educational systems, its investments in the provision of higher education and the priority given to compulsory primary education result in an insignificant investment in ECE. The largest investment of federal resources in day-care centers and preschools comes from the Ministry of Social

Development (MDS). But since 2000 the MDS has been orienting state and municipal social assistance to apply these resources in other areas (for example, toy centers, home day care, social-educational family support initiatives), since the educational sector was assigned responsibility for the day-care centers. Thus the present financing situation is unfavorable. A new educational financing proposal, FUNDEB, which will also include early childhood education and high school in the fund that at present only deals with elementary education, is being discussed in the National Congress. For this purpose, the resources shall be increased to 80 percent of the state and municipal resources destined to education. The initial proposal for this new fund, sent to National Congress by the Executive Powers in June 2005, excludes financing for the enrollment of children from zero to three. The reason given for this was the higher cost of serving this age bracket, but it also became clear that many do not yet recognize and accept the day-care center as a legitimate institution within the educational sector. However, due to the actions of the social movements in defense of the right to early childhood education amongst parliament members, the enrollment of children from zero to three was included in the proposal of the fund approved by the Chamber of Deputies in January 2006. The proposal still must be approved in the Federal Senate. The resources of the fund shall be distributed proportionately according to the number of children and pupils registered in the different educational levels and modalities, utilizing factors of differentiation that take into account the cost differences between levels. The law regulating this distribution is still being discussed. The actual situation of the financing of ECE in the country will depend to a great extent on what factor of differentiation will be defined in the law for the registration of children 0–3 years of age (day-care centers) and 4 to 6 (preschool).

Teacher Preparation

For preservice teacher preparation the 1996 Law defined optimal qualification of a university degree, but accepted the minimum educational qualification of secondary level at a teacher training school (licensure). Data for 2004 show that about 6 percent of the preschool teachers and 17 percent of day-care-center workers did not even have the minimum preparation demanded. A national program for the preparation of these professionals—ProInfantil “Program of Initial In-Service Training of Teachers in Early Childhood Education”—started in 2005. Another problem involves the curricula of the teacher preparation courses, which do not always deal adequately with the specificities of ECE. Regarding in-service training, there is no national regulation, this being up to the educational systems and to the school institutions to provide it to its teachers.

Curriculum

The 1996 Law stipulates that all Brazilian day-care centers and preschools, both public and private, design their programs in accordance with the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education instituted in 1999 by the National Council of Education. The municipalities generally have a common pedagogical plan for all the schools in their network. In 1998, the Ministry of Education

released the National Curricular Reference for Early Childhood Education to provide guidance in the preparation of the curricula. Unlike the National Guidelines, the National Reference is not mandatory. In actual practice local programs reflect the influences of different theoretical approaches, models, and experiences.

The Family

The idea of early care and education as complementary to the roles of both the family and the community performed by the ECE institutions is affirmed in the laws referenced earlier. Because the preschool educational phase is not compulsory, enrollment of the child is a family option. Demand is not always met, because there are insufficient spaces for all those who seek them. There are no data available to estimate the unmet demand.

The importance of the participation of the families in the definition and implementation of pedagogical proposals is stressed in the national and local guidelines and references. However, the way in which this partnership is actually carried out in local programs varies greatly, and in most cases is rather limited.

In cases where abuse and maltreatment of children by members of the family is suspected, the program is to direct the problem to the local Protective Council. According to the 1990 Statute of the Child and Adolescent this is the organization entrusted by the society to care for the welfare and rights of the child and adolescent. It is up to this Council to refer the family to programs of promotion, orientation, or treatment, or to take the case to judicial authorities.

Access and Supply

One of the challenges for ECE policy in Brazil involves the inequalities in gaining access to admission in day-care centers and preschools due to the socioeconomic level of the family. 2003 National IBGE data show that in families with a per capita monthly income of less than 1/2 the minimum salary the rate of admission is only 8 percent of children from 0 to 3 years of age and 61 percent for those from 4-6. In families with a higher income, above two minimum salaries, these percentages are 20 percent and 82 percent respectively. Many low-income families that do not manage to enroll their children in an ECE program resort to dangerous alternatives, such as leaving them at home in the care of older siblings or even at home on their own. In rural Brazil children sometimes accompany their mothers into the plantations and help with the work there.

The National Education Plan proposes that, given the limitations of financial and technical resources, public ECE provision should give priority to the children of lower income families, locating programs in the areas of greatest need. The deficiencies in the sectorial policies, especially in the areas of education, social assistance, and health, need to be overcome in order for the rights of 0- to 6-year-old children, already recognized in the legal documents, to be guaranteed in fact.

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Angela Rabelo Barreto and Sonia Larrubia Valverde

The Ecology of Childhood

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s brought significant changes in values and customs in family relations as well as in the broader social structure. The intensification of urbanization, the expansion of working women followed by the increasing presence of mothers with young children in the labor market, the decrease in number of siblings and of urban spaces for collective games, and the greater concern with childhood rights, all led to a redefinition of the boundary between public and private, indicating a new place of childhood, characterized by a change in the locus of child socialization from single to multiple places.

In Brazil, this change was set off in the context of the political transition that was leading toward the redemocratization of the country, and must be comprehended within the confluence of several factors. These included the legal accomplishments in the fields of children's, women's, and family rights, changes in family structure, the contributions in the diverse areas of knowledge that challenged the idea of a fragile and incomplete child, and the impact of this new vision of childhood as a subject with legitimacy for early childhood education (ECE) public policies.

The Broad Range of Achieved Rights

Despite a long regime of dictatorship installed with the military coup of 1964, the 1970s were marked by a true revolution in the field of social and individual rights. The accomplishments are reflected in the Federal Constitution of 1988,

with the recognition of the universal right to education for children from zero to six years of age, and the right of working men and women to day-care centers and preschools for their children. These changes offer a new vision of the child, of childhood, of early childhood education, of women, of the professional, and of gender relations and family responsibility. The right to education from birth presupposes a social responsibility for the child and the creation of alternatives in childhood socialization that complement the role of the family. The child begins to be seen as occupying a place in the present as a protagonist of his own life, a citizen in development. Women become the target of important policies promoting gender equality and the elimination of all the forms of discrimination. The integration of the social and educational dimensions, resulting from the fact of the right to the day-care center and preschool stated in the chapters of the Law on Education and Work, legitimizes the idea of responsibility shared between the family and the state, establishing an intersection between private matters and those of a public order regarding the education/socialization of the young child. The expansion of rights shall also benefit the professionals through the requirement that there be specific training for early childhood teachers and caregivers.

Transformations in the Brazilian Family

The place of childhood in the contemporary context is related to the transformation in the composition of the Brazilian family. The progressive increase in participation by women with young children in the labor market coincides with a reduction in the percentage of extended families, a reduction in the birthrate and an increase in the number of single-parent families. Studies of trends in the work patterns of Brazilian women reveal a 54 percent increase in workforce participation between the 1980s and the 1990s. In 2002 women increased their participation in the labor market more than men (2.5% vs. 1.6%). The birthrate dropped from 6.3 births per woman of child bears in age in 1960 to 2.3 in 2003. Persons per household went from 5.1 percent in 1970 to 3.6 percent in 2003, while the proportion of women household heads grew from 15 percent in 1980 to 29 percent in 2003, revealing a growth of almost 30 percent over the last ten years.

These changes reflect broader international patterns, but they have not been accompanied by mechanisms of support for families with young children. Although the provision of places in day-care centers and preschools has been increasing in the past years, the rates of coverage are still unsatisfactory. In 2003, 37.7 percent of the children from 0 to 6 years of age attended an ECE setting, reflecting a direct association among parents' level of education, (especially of the mother), family income, and admission to day-care centers or preschools. The probability of children attending a day-care center or preschool increases according to the educational level of the parents, and it is the poorest families that have the least access to these services, even though legislation places a priority on the children in those families.

The transformations in the family are also qualitative: they point to a crisis in the traditional family form consisting of two parents and their related children, which, although still predominant, start to cede space to more heterogeneous

forms. Separations and remarriages create new relations and roles; the proportion of married couples decreases while the quantity of singles and separated parents increases, constituting a segment that is predominantly made up of women.

From Private to Public Spaces

The more intense and effective participation of the woman in economic, political, and social life and the significant expansion of the role of mother creates pressure for a revision of the traditional female contributions in the domestic space as well as a redefinition of the masculine role, and calls for the construction of relations of a more equal nature regarding the reproduction and care of the children. The decline in the children's sources of socialization within the interior of the domestic space has led to the creation of other spaces and relations outside of the family sphere. While in the past children were gathered most frequently within the home and the family, at present we see a broad circulation of children in formal or nonformal public spaces, showing the multiple contexts of extra-family socialization, especially in the urban centers.

Within the academic sphere the production of knowledge on the present development of public ECE policies from the perspective of the ecology of childhood is still scarce and has little impact on the planning of the policies and the attitude of professionals and users in general. Very little research addresses this new place of childhood at the intersections of family responsibility, out-of-home paid work, and child care. There is little research on the nature of the socialization processes in these nonfamily contexts. There are also very few studies that deal with ECE institutions as a new experience of child socialization, an issue that gains space in some research groups, but still finds very little relevance amongst the ECE professionals, or within the curricula of the teacher training courses.

Changes in the Focus of ECE Research

Up until the 1970s, research showed a great concern for the development of the child. The studies on day-care centers in general reflected an interest in the effects of maternal deprivation on the development of children attending these institutions, and research on preschool was directed to the development of strategies to avoid a future school failure, from the point of view of cultural deprivation.

Researches on day-care centers took a qualitative leap in the 1980s, by shifting the focus of the developing child to the institutional contexts, situating the day-care center as the legitimate field for data collection. Strongly inspired by foreign literature, these research projects brought new elements previously not contemplated in the area: maternity, the status of woman, the role of the professional, the pedagogical dimension, the family and institution relationship, and the role of the state.

Upon shifting the attention away from the day-care center as a place primarily of "family absence" and of the adult as the only provider of affection, new perspectives were established in the field of developmental psychology, demonstrating

that young children are capable of establishing affective bonds with adults other than the mother, and revealing the importance of the day-care center as a context of socialization where the children establish a wide range of relationships with their peers.

By the 1990s investigation of childhood was also observed in other fields, like the history of childhood, revealing the childhoods constituted in different contexts and present within diverse social practices, educational projects, and public policies. In anthropology the work on childhood in the indigenous societies stands out, presenting the manner in which these peoples experiment and express themselves in their social life, and demonstrating how little interest in indigenous children was shown in most of the research and writing carried out previously. However, this important area of research does not intersect at all with early childhood care and education studies.

The Sociology of Childhood

The recently established sociology of childhood, that arose in Europe and in the United States as a field of investigation within the social sciences in the 1990s, has been a source of inspiration for various centers of research in childhood education. The conception of childhood as a social category is guiding the creation of new methodologies that place the child as the protagonist of its own life, seeking to study the children by means of their voices, their practices, and their possibilities of creating and recreating the social reality in which they are placed.

The place of childhood as subject legitimizes the ECE contexts as settings of socialization and spaces where the children can live their childhoods in the present, and not as a promise for the future, occupying different places, experimenting in diverse interactions with their peers and participating in cultural production in their interaction with others. It also legitimizes the ECE institutions as settings where fathers, mothers, and others responsible for children may share in the care and the education of the young child and participate in the construction of the institutional culture. This new sense of place has direct implications for ECE policies and practices. It presupposes an integrated, unified, universal approach, strong public investment, directed at the 0-6 age-group and attuned to the needs and interests of the children and their families.

The Gap between Rhetoric and Reality

However this conception, although implicit in the Brazilian Constitution, is still an ideal that has not been debated or become concrete in the form of social practices. This gap reflects the changes in the national and international political and economic scenario that have served as the theater for our legislation. Between the proclamation of the Constitution (1988) and its regulation (1996) a new world economic order has imposed itself, marked by the restriction of the role of the state in social policies, including the reduction of public investment in education, threatening many accomplishments in the rights arena, especially for women and for childhood. The law that regulates the inclusion of day-care centers and preschools in the educational sector was elaborated within the context of these

neoliberal reforms, when the policies for basic education were redefined and the resources channeled primarily to elementary education. At the present time the constitutional Article that guarantees the right to day-care centers and preschools for the children of working men and women has not been carried forward into regulations; the social movements that motivated this conquest are demobilized. The topic finds little resonance in the educational sector, the main source of public policies for ECE, which has no tradition of dealing with a nonscholarly conception of ECE.

The Influences of International Agencies and Organizations

In addition, the international treaties and the action plans of international conferences have played a role in the definition of the educational policies and are incorporated into national plans, demanding adjustments that are not always suited to the guidelines already established in national legislation.

The 1990 Declaration of Jomtien (Education for All), that adopted as its first goal "Expand and improve the early childhood care and education, in an integrated fashion, especially for the most vulnerable and less favored children" recommends a realignment of the early childhood care and education policies in the developing countries. Haddad observes the coexistence of two sets of priorities in response to fulfilling this goal, which differ according to age-group. One refers to the expansion of preschool classes for the age that precedes compulsory schooling, with a view to universalize admission to ages of 4-5, as a form of guaranteeing full access to formal schooling. The second refers to programs for families and communities directed at children under 3 years of age, reflecting the orientations of international organizations led by the World Bank. In this latter case these organizations use different terminologies to refer to the early childhood programs in developing countries (*Early Childhood Care and Development* (UNESCO), *Early Childhood Development* (World Bank), and *Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development* (UNICEF)), and give different meanings to the terms childhood and early childhood education. In the name of combating poverty and of a holistic view of childhood development, supported by research on the development of the brain, these terms have subtly altered the concept of childhood as a social category and of early childhood education as the legitimate space for the child to live its childhood, undermining the concept of social responsibility and accentuating the gap between developed and developing countries. In contrast to what is proposed for developed countries, the literature of international organizations regarding developing countries advocates that programs should be less costly and run by mothers or community leaders; parents and close caregivers (such as older siblings) should be an equal target population; settings should be community or home-based; and private sector involvement should be encouraged. These premises de-emphasize the accomplishments that have led to recognizing a specific ECE culture, which were hardly achieved and require a correspondingly specific pedagogy. Whether we will be able to resist these regressive outside influences is a question both for the present and the future.

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Culture, Race, and Ethnicity

Culture, race, and ethnicity themes have only recently entered the political and academic debate in Brazilian Early Childhood Education (ECE) and they are just beginning to be addressed. These themes deal specifically with the ethnic-racial inequalities that blacks (45%) and indigenous (0.4%) populations experience compared to whites (54%). Historic processes of construction and combat of these inequalities are not the same for black and indigenous peoples.

Blacks

After having practiced slavery for over three centuries (until 1888), Brazil was the last country to abolish the enslavement of African blacks. During slavery, the domination of African blacks extended beyond slaves, it also affected free blacks. The educational legislation of that time prohibited slaves, free blacks, and people suffering from contagious diseases from obtaining an education.

The abolition of slavery was gradual and was regulated by a series of laws: in 1871 freedom was conferred to children born of slave mothers (Law of the Free Womb—*Ventre Livre*). As a result of this law, the first text on day-care centers (crèches, 1879) was published in Brazil. These documents revealed that day-care centers (crèches) were conceived as the institutions designed to shelter the newly freed children of mothers who were forced to continue as slaves.

After the complete abolition of slavery, the processes summarized below marked the social, economic, and political relations between whites and blacks:

- Unlike the United States, Brazil did not adopt a legislation of racial segregation; therefore the legal definition of slavery as belonging to a specific ethnicity or race did not occur.
- Brazil did not develop a specific policy to integrate the newly freed blacks into the broader society, which strengthened the bases of racial inequalities.
- In accordance with the state policy of “whitening” the population in accordance with the eugenic racial policies developed in Europe in the nineteenth century,

Brazil encouraged European **immigration** during the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century.

- The country adopted a system of racial classification based on appearances resulting from the simultaneous consideration of physical traits (skin color, facial features, hair), social-economic condition, and region of residence. This is one of the reasons that explains the use of the word blacks and not Afro-Brazilians.
- The existence of a large mixed population (38% identify themselves as “brown,” *pardos*) that is diversely distributed throughout the national territory. The poorest regions—in the Northeast—are those that have the largest percentage of *Negros* (black/*preto* and brown/*pardo*) due to the “whitening” policy discussed earlier.
- The commingling of standards of simultaneous vertical racial relations, producing intense social inequality, and horizontal ones in which no open hostility or racial hatred is observed, permitted interracial marriages and friendly commingling in certain social spaces under specific circumstances.

This last peculiarity of the racial relations in Brazil, associated with the process of racial classification based on appearance, created a belief in the myth of Brazilian racial democracy. This myth presupposes not only friendly and cordial relations, but also equality of opportunities for whites and blacks. Since the 1950s the myth of racial democracy has been challenged by white and black researchers and by activists of the Black movement. In the late 1970s, researchers highlighted the racial inequality regarding access to material and symbolic goods, urging people to interpret this inequality as expressions of racism, and to propose policies that permit supplanting it. In 1996, the Brazilian government recognized for the first time that the country is structurally racist, having assumed its historic debt with black and the indigenous people.

Three Schools of Thought in Brazil

Three perspectives characterize Brazilian social thought regarding racial relations. The first one postulates the existence of racial democracy. The second one recognizes a deep inequality between the white and black segments of the population, but interprets the racial relations in the postabolitionist period as remnants of the ancient regime, incompatible with the new social order that is shaping itself into a competitive society of classes. Despite the fact that this perspective recognizes the existence of racial inequalities, it is optimistic, hoping that the racial inequality will eventually disappear with the development of industrialization. This perspective greatly influenced the Brazilian educational thought. While recognizing the massive concentration of black students in the poorer layers of the population, Brazilian educational thought tends to identify the educational difficulties experienced by blacks exclusively with the inequalities caused by poverty, and fails to consider the specific impacts of racial membership.

Without denying that the destiny of the black population is associated with the political and economic history of the Brazilian society, the third perspective views these inequalities as also due to the unequal opportunities for social mobility after the abolishment of slavery, and the contemporary racism (structural and symbolic) faced by the black and indigenous populations.

Race Inequalities in Early Childhood Education

The concern with race inequalities in ECE is very recent in Brazil. Neither researchers nor activists of the black and indigenous movements have dedicated any attention to the theme. Their concern has been oriented more to the educational situation starting with primary school education. In this context, the written work is limited and there is no consensual political agenda to orient the action.

This inattention is worrying, since blacks and residents in the Northeast between 0 and 6 years of age comprise the greatest percentage of the poor and very poor people of Brazil, with the highest rates of mortality and infant malnutrition and the least access to basic sanitation. Quality indicators indicate that the ECE of the Northeastern region is also of the poorest quality in the nation.

Supply and access. In 2003, 11.7 percent of Brazilian children 0–3 years of age and 68.4 percent 4–6 years of age attended some kind of ECE. Despite an incredible growth rate between 1970 and 1990, studies from the 1990s showed that ECE grew the least in that decade, and presented totally unsatisfactory quality indicators. From a budgetary perspective, ECE is the educational level in which the per-pupil investment is the lowest in the country. The ethnic-racial inequalities in ECE appear on several different levels: in the access and in the quality of the service offered, in the retention of children 7 years of age and older, in the institutional segregation and in the discriminatory processes observed in the institutional practices.

In Brazil, children of higher income levels and white children have the greatest access to ECE. However, due to the expansion of ECE during the 1980s as a strategy to combat poverty, day-care centers, preschools, and improvised literacy classes of low quality were opened for the poor, in poor population regions (slums, urban outskirts). As a result, it is possible to find in some strata of income and age a greater percentage of black children attending day-care centers and preschool. The same expansion policy of ECE for regions considered “politically dangerous” (the “pockets of poverty” of the Northeast) during the last decade of the military dictatorship (1978–1985) caused a specific pattern for the rates of coverage: the Northeastern region presents the best rates of ECE coverage both for white as well as for nonwhite children 4–6 years of age. However, better rates of coverage may be associated with the worst ECE quality indicators. Therefore, the Northeastern region simultaneously presents the greatest coverage and the greatest rate of teachers without qualification, who receive the worst salaries and who work in child-care settings presenting the worst material conditions, including poor basic sanitation.

ECE expansion and racial segregation. This same model of ECE expansion adopted in states with a high percentage of blacks has resulted in the most homogeneous clientele at all the levels of public education. Public day-care centers and preschools receive almost exclusively poor children. While this may seem positive, it can also be negative, since social and racial segregation occurs and there is little ethnic-racial or economic diversity.

Financing. Due to this process of antidemocratic expansion and the low financial investment of the state, the ECE has been failing children. This distortion of the system (that has been diminishing recently) especially affects poor, black children of the Northeast. Until 1987 no data were collected on how disadvantaged children functioned in ECE. It was commonly believed that black children started primary school education at a later age than white children, when in fact, substantial quantities (in 1995 an estimated one million children) were retained in preschool. This finding is in accord with research results and the claims of black leadership, which describe the Brazilian school system as having “hostile ambience” for black children or at the very least being indifferent to the racism that occurs both in the school institution and in the broader society. To quote Pinto (1993) “This hostile ambience has been detected in the curriculum, in the didactic material of the most diverse disciplines, in the relations amongst the pupils and in the relations between teachers and pupils.” At least since the 1970s studies of school texts, children’s literature, and other pedagogical materials (toys) have demonstrated the racial discrimination found within ECE. This discrimination manifests itself in the less representation of black and indigenous characters that can serve as positive role models, omitting and even denying the contributions of black and indigenous people to the cultural formation of Brazil.

Research conducted in the schools has uncovered the discriminatory practices that reflect the ways in which black children are seen in a negative light in terms of their intellectual possibilities. Among white children, the exclusion of black peers and the use of pejorative nicknames for them is not unusual, and most of the time this behavior is ignored by the teachers. In addition, there is little help from the government or from private institutions for improving teacher preparation regarding human rights. Some initiatives have been taken; for example the inclusion of the theme of “multiculturalism” in the national curriculum. However, a recent law that requires the inclusion of the history of Africa and of the contributions of the Afro-Brazilian culture to the Brazilian society does not include ECE, being aimed only at primary and secondary school levels.

Indigenous Peoples

In Brazil, it is estimated that between 350,000 and 500,000 Indigenous people reside on indigenous lands. There are 219 different indigenous nations speaking 180 different languages. At the last census (2000), 739,000 people declared themselves Indigenous. The process of Portuguese colonization adopted in Brazil, as well as the later indigenous policies, exterminated indigenous peoples and their descendants, and banished innumerable languages from human culture. In the process of Portuguese and later Brazilian colonization, the schools played a fundamental role as the institution “domesticating” the “savages.” The situation only changed after the dictatorship (in the 1980s), when the Constitution of 1988 was approved and recognized Brazil, for the first time, as a multiethnic and multilingual nation.

Supply and access for indigenous peoples. Among other rights, the Constitution of 1988 assured the indigenous peoples' access to a specific intercultural and bilingual school education. The National Council of Education recognized and established norms for the creation and operation of "indigenous schools." In accord with the legal requirement, in 1999 the Ministry of Education carried out for the first time the "Indigenous School Census," which collected the basic information available on education in indigenous territories.

ECE makes up 20.6 percent of the total school registrations in the Indigenous School Census (1999). Ninety-eight percent of these children are in public settings, 56 percent are between 4 and 6 years old, and 72 percent come from Indigenous cultures. Over one-third of school registrations in ECE consist of children of 7 years and above.

ECE and indigenous nations. Not all the indigenous nations favor the creation of ECE settings for their children. These nations fear the diffusion of values that are incompatible with their culture, the loss of their mother tongues, and practices that remind them of the "domesticating" education their ancestors suffered. Despite the fact that the theme of indigenous education is increasingly a subject of academic study, ECE has not been highlighted in these efforts. This is an important and unjustifiable gap in the efforts of researchers. In April of 2005, a national debate was held on ECE and indigenous peoples for the first time. One of the issues under discussion was how compatible the ECE model known and disseminated by the western world is for peoples whose primary socialization does not occur in the context of the normative model of the nuclear family found in the West.

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Fúlvia Rosemberg

Poverty

Brazil is not a poor country, but rather a country with many poor people. This is the thesis on Brazilian poverty that is most accepted at present, based on the fact that Brazil ranks amongst the world's highest rates of social inequality, a situation that has not undergone great alterations despite the progress achieved in the country's economic development and modernization throughout the twentieth century.

According to official statistics, the proportion of the poor in the country decreased from 39 percent to 33 percent between 1977 and 1998, but the absolute number grew from 40 million to 50 million people. This total has only started to diminish only recently.

Data reproduced from a table elaborated by Almeida (2000) provide an idea of what the differences in mean income in Brazil are compared to other countries. Of a total of sixteen countries, six were selected for this illustration. The difference between the average income of the countries and the income of the poorest 20 percent supplies a measure of its internal inequality. One country may be richer than another (for example, Brazil compared to India), but present a substantially larger indicator of inequality.

Comparison between the average annual *per capita* income of the total population with the poorest 20% in six countries (1993, in US\$)

Country	A (Average <i>per capita</i> income of the total population)	B (Average <i>per capita</i> income of the poorest 20%)	Relation A/B
United States	24,240	5,814	4.2
Chile	8,400	1,386	6.1
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>5,370</i>	<i>564</i>	<i>9.5</i>
Indonesia	3,150	1,370	2.3
India	1,220	537	2.3
Guinea-Bissau	840	88	9.5

Source: PNUD—1996 (*apud* Almeida, 2000, p. 36).

The classification of the countries according to the Human Development Index, reported periodically by the United Nations Program for Development, situates Brazil in the group of countries of Average Human Development. In 2005, the country was classified in the 63rd position, having shown a tendency toward improvement on this indicator over the past few years.

Brazil has no legal definition of a poverty line. The most commonly used classification of the population brackets considered poor and extremely poor is based on a monthly *per capita* family income calculated in minimum salaries (MS). In 2005 the monthly MS was 300 *Reais* or US\$125. The poor are considered those people with a *per capita* income of less than 1/2 MS (approximately \$2 per day) and extremely poor those with less than 1/4 MS. This poverty line corresponds to the income necessary to provide their needs with feeding, dwelling, clothes, and transportation, amongst others; the line of extreme poverty refers exclusively to feeding needs. According to this definition, in 1998 there were 50 million poor people (32.7%) in Brazil, 21 million of whom (13.9% of the total population) were extremely poor.

Monteiro (2003) calculates the proportion of the Brazilian population considered poor by regions, using the criteria of the *Projeto Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger Project), a program launched in 2002 by the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers Party). These criteria combine the family income and cost of living of the different regions, considering the domestic production of the agricultural families and not taking into account the expenditures with rental and acquisition of their own homes.

Percentage of poor population in Brazil by regions
(1999)

Region	Area		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Northern	35.4	38.1 ^a	36.2
Northeastern	42.9	59.7	48.8
Southeastern	14.9	34.3	17.0
Southern	15.7	28.4	18.3
Central-Western	20.0	34.0	22.3
Brazil	23.1	46.1	27.8

^a Includes only the state of Tocantins, excluding the rest of the rural Amazon. *Source*: Monteiro, 2003, p. 10.

Table shows that the greatest contrast is observed between the rural and urban zones and amongst the large geographical regions of the country. The Northeast is a region that presents the greatest proportions of poor people, far above the others, both in the urban as well as in the rural zone.

The condition of poverty in Brazil aligns itself with the color/ethnic origin of the population. According to *IBGE* (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), of almost half of the 180 million Brazilians who classify themselves as *Negroes*, 41 percent are brown and 6 percent black. Although the rates of illiteracy among these two groups have been dropping, in 2003 they still represented more than double that registered for whites. The *Negro* population is proportionately larger in the Northeastern and Central-Western regions, where the average income of the blacks and browns is only slightly more than half that of the whites. There is no comparative data for the Indigenous population, which totaled almost half a million people according to the last Census.

Childhood Poverty

Several studies have already shown that poverty in Brazil affects the young child population most intensely, especially children between 0 and 6 years of age, the age bracket that corresponds to early childhood education. Various factors contribute to this: (1) the family life cycle, since the families with young children bear heavier expenses and count on a smaller quantity of people in the workforce than the others; (2) the fact that the poorest families, with less school education and who live in the less developed regions, have a higher average number of children than the others; (3) and less access to the basic public services both in the less developed regions as well as in the poorest neighborhoods of the large cities.

Kappel (2005) developed a careful characterization of the young child population in the 0–6 age-group, based on *IBGE* data. In 2001, there were, approximately 22 million children between 0 and 6 years of age in the country. A decrease in the birthrates from 2.7 to 2.4 in the country between 1992 and 2001 was combined with an increase of newborn life expectancy to keep the total young child

population relatively stable over the past ten years. The regional differences in the birth rates also decreased during that period. These differences continued to be strongly associated with the level of the mothers' schooling: those women with less than four years of education have an average rate of fertility of 3.2 children, while those with more than eight years of study have an average of 1.6 children.

In 2001, of the total of 50 million Brazilian families, 16 million (32%) had children from 0 to 6 years of age. Of these, 38 percent presented *per capita* monthly family incomes below 1/2 an MS, that is, they were considered poor. The proportion of families in the lowest income bracket is significantly higher in the Northeastern region, as shown in the table.

Families with children from 0 to 6 years of age, per classes of *per capita* monthly family income in minimum salaries, according to the regions-Brazil, 2001

		Families with at least 1 child from 0 to 6 years of age					
		Classes of per capita monthly family income in MS (%)					
Brazil and Great Regions	Total ^a	Up to 1/2 MS	More than 1/2 up to 1	More than 1 to 2	More than 2 to 3	More than 3 to 5	More than 5 MS
Brazil ^b	16,143,638	38.1	25.1	16.6	5.3	3.4	2.9
Northern ^b	1,017,114	42.5	26.0	13.7	3.7	2.7	1.9
Northeast	4,889,150	60.1	18.2	7.2	2.0	1.4	1.2
Southeast	6,592,766	26.2	27.8	21.3	7.1	4.7	4.0
Southern	2,413,616	26.6	28.8	23.9	7.3	4.2	3.4
Central-Western	1,203,979	32.0	30.2	16.7	6.2	4.0	3.9

Source: Kappel, 2005, Table 2, p. 187, based on data from PNAD 2001, IBGE.

^a Including those without income and without declaration of income.

^b Excluding the rural population of the Northern region.

An important aspect to consider is the number of families headed by women: in 2001, 27.3 percent of the total families were in this situation. The infant mortality rates decreased significantly between 1992 and 2001, but they still reveal a significant regional inequality.

Monteiro (2003) shows how the rates of infant undernourishment in children between 0 and 5 years follows the same tendency of increasing poverty in the rural zone of the Northeastern region (25.2% compared to 16.6% in the urban). In addition, there is a significant difference in the rates of the urban zones in the Northern (16.6%) and Northeastern regions (13%) compared to the Central-Southern region (4.6%).

This author identifies the lack of access to public health services, education, and sanitation, among others, as an important factor associated to the incidence of childhood undernourishment, in addition to the family income. In this sense, the rural population is more affected than the urban. A longitudinal study during the period 1989–1996 showed that the decline observed in the rates of childhood

undernourishment in Brazil are more due to the increase in the coverage of basic services of health, schooling of mothers, and the supply of water than to the small increase in family income recorded over these years. These data demonstrate that progress in the living conditions of the population is not obtained simply through higher economic growth rates, but requires the mediation of greater investments in basic public services.

However, the younger children are precisely those that benefit least from public expenditures in the social area. Based on estimates of the proportion of expenditures on social programs that reach the different age and income brackets of the population, Camargo (2004) demonstrated that social policies in Brazil present a pro-elderly, antichildren, and antipoor people pattern. Of a total of 200 billion *Reais* that the country spends annually on social programs (health, education, social welfare, social assistance, and work), more than 60 percent are targeted to retirement funds and pensions. In addition to these expenditures there are those spent on social assistance, half of which (5 billion *Reais*), go to the elderly.

Comparing social expenditures on the aged with those invested in the 0–14 age-group, this author calculates 12 percent of the GNP for elders (6% of the population) compared with 3.6 percent of the GNP for children (29.6% of the population—a total of 50 million in 2000). This bias is even more evident when children between 0 and 6 years of age are highlighted. Although Brazil practically universalized access to obligatory elementary education for children between 7 and 14 years of age during the decade of the 1990s, in 2003 only 11.7 percent of the children from 0 to 3 years old and 68.4 percent of those from 4 to 6 years old actually attended ECE institutions (see Country Profile).

School attendance rates are higher for the higher income segments and the white population. In 2001, the chance of a higher family income child (more than three minimum salaries family income *per capita*) being enrolled in ECE, compared to those of a lower income child, were 3.5 times greater for the 0–3 age bracket and 1.6 times greater for the 4–6 age bracket.

Attendance rates were higher for children classified as white. In the 0–3 age bracket 11.4 percent of the white children were enrolled in ECE, compared to 9.6 percent of the black and brown children. In the 4–6 age bracket the difference was 67.9 percent for white versus 63.3 percent for the black and brown children.

These data show quite clearly that the social policies of the country are not able to significantly alter existing patterns of social and racial inequality, and that the young children are at a relative disadvantage in relation to other segments of the population, not only regarding access to income but also in terms of access to the social programs.

Social Policies and Poverty

Without ever having implemented a universal social welfare system, as occurred in several European countries in the post World War II period, Brazil is currently accumulating the contradictions of a society that was industrialized and urbanized with the impasses of a nonhegemonic country in a globalized world. The neoliberal policies of weakening the capacity of the state to intervene are combining with the postindustrial society, high unemployment, and social exclusion to become firmly established as structural characteristics.

Over the past years, several programs to supplement family income were adopted and directed to the poorer families. The *Bolsa Escola* (School Scholarship) program was one of the first, and required in return from the families that their children between 7 and 14 years of age attend schools. The shape of these programs evolved over the past five years together with significant expansion. With the commencement of the *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) program, the main social proposal of the 2002 government, the diverse types of income supplementation programs were unified into what is now called *Bolsa Família* (Family Scholarship), coordinated by the Ministry of Social Development and Combat to Hunger.

One of the consequences of this unification under the auspice of social assistance is a weakening of the emphasis on the children's school attendance as an obligation of the families receiving assistance. In addition, at the intersection with the crèche programs, the previous stimulus to education has been switched to a stimulus for mothers to stay at home and take care of their young children, contradicting the purpose of the *Bolsa Escola* program.

Bolsa Família is an income transfer program aimed at families in poverty situations that expects a contribution by the families, in the form of participation in health activities, enrolling their children in schools, and participating in nutrition education programs. In 2005, a total of 6,562,155 families were being catered to, receiving an average of 66 *Reais* (\$28) a month. The goal defined for 2007 is to reach 11.4 million families.

Neither research nor evaluations are yet available on how these programs are affecting the living conditions of the children from 0 to 6 years of age. But it should be considered that the education policies aimed at young children in Brazil must overcome inequalities in access to day-care centers and preschools, otherwise these efforts to combat poverty will not have a long-term effect on the future of the poorest children.

In any case, it seems that income supplementation programs, whether or not associated to education and other social policies, have come to stay. They have political support, have gained support among international organizations and, more importantly, correspond to pressing and dramatic social necessities. However, in a society that commingles these programs with patronage-oriented political practices and confuses social policy with benevolence and rights with favors, it is difficult to disseminate a conception of social policy and income supplementation based purely on rights of citizenship, which also creates obligations for those benefited and which does not cause discrimination in social life. Social inequalities cannot be understood exclusively in terms of the right to receive certain goods and services. It is also necessary to consider the rights of integration that would permit individuals to be active citizens, with full rights to live in society.

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Violence

In Brazil, as in many other Western capitalist societies, the largely urban phenomenon of violence assumed endemic proportions beginning in the 1980s, and challenged the efficacy of socially controlled institutions.

Although *violence* (and its consequences) attacks all social segments, its diverse *forms of manifestation* produce a hierarchic complexity that affects social groups differentially, depending on their particular vulnerabilities. Exposure to violent events occurs differently for blacks and whites, young and old, men and women, poor and rich, residents of central or peripheral regions of large urban centers. To these characteristics are added those related to age, given that the risk of victimization occurs especially in the economically nonproductive groups. The main victims of homicides in Brazil, for example, comprise a predominantly young, male population residing in regions where the processes of social exclusion are accentuated.

Structural Violence

Violence in its *structural* manifestation is defined in terms of life conditions produced as a result of economic decisions. In its cruelest form this type of violence takes as its victims those families that live in poverty or misery, and especially affects the children. In Brazil its result can be seen through the historical and social conditions that produced the institutionalization of poor children in shelters, child-juvenile labor as a form of supplementation of the household budget and the phenomenon of the boys and girls that live in the streets. In the case of early childhood education (ECE), this violence was reproduced in the sphere of the national public policies aimed at expansion of child-care places which, supported in the name of low-cost investment, generated only small coverage with public financing and established a range of different types of admission (public, private, philanthropic, home-based). This process makes access difficult on behalf of children coming from poor families, who receive less attention (see Country Profile), and creates institutions that provide the children with services of varying quality.

Other forms of violence, labeled *social*, *intra-family*, and *institutional*, also have the greatest impacts on children and adolescents, violating their rights and shaping both the conditions for and their opportunities for development.

Intra-family Violence

In relation to intra-family or domestic violence, its physical form is the most visible, being both the most common type in the country and also including cases so severe that they require the attention of the Health System. It is manifest as physical and sexual abuse, where intentional use of force may even lead to a risk of death. From 1997 to 2003, the National Secretariat of Human Rights received 8,600 reports of sexual and commercial exploitation of children. A National Program has been developed as a form of combating mainly the sexual exploitation linked to tourism. Girls are especially the victims of sexual violence. In relation to physical violence, according to IBGE data 20 percent of Brazilian children are victims and in 80 percent of the cases parents are the aggressors. Studies by the Center for the Study of Victims of Violence show that child abuse is a grave public health problem, having become the main cause of death of children under age 5.

As part of a national culture centered on the adult and permissive with punitive forms of childhood discipline, physical violence is combined with *negligence and psychological violence*, in which a process of humiliation and submission of the child occurs provoked by adults or by other children. This culture results in a lack of knowledge of the real situation of victimized children, because it produces a “plot of silence” which leads to the helplessness of the children and a continuation of the fear and negligence.

Psychological Violence: Bullying in Schools

Within the sphere of the school, psychological violence has been discussed mainly through studies on *bullying*, characterized as a combination of aggressive, intentional, and repetitive behavior perpetrated by one or more pupils against others, causing pain, anguish, and suffering. Generally prejudice and nontolerance to differences are at the base of this behavior.

These are also the factors that appear associated to *school violence* in a broader context expressed in terms both of how the institution understands the problem and of its educational practices as (re)producers of social violence. Studies in the area, which have intensified in the last decade and become more centered on the educational settings serving children from 7 to 14 years of age, raise issues regarding institutional violence specific to the school and also to its articulation with extramural violence.

If the issue of school violence in the elementary and high school has received more attention recently in research and in Brazilian educational policies, this has in general not been the case in early childhood education. There are some research projects that study the day-care centers and preschools as protected spaces for the child regarding domestic violence. The concept is that daily attendance provides the child with other adults who can accept some responsibility for their physical integrity, acting more rapidly when threatening situations occur in the realm of

the family. At the same time there are a few recent research projects that seek to understand how violence is manifest within the day-care centers and preschools themselves, mainly concerned with the fact that these children occupy an even more fragile position than older children in relation to the education settings they attend. This violence is manifested in two ways: (1) through processes of discrimination by race and gender resulting from differentiated treatment by the teachers, especially affecting girls and Negroes, and (2) through some care/educational routines that treat children as objects of intervention rather than as subjects with rights.

The History of Violence Against Young Children in Brazil

These processes of child victimization can be traced to a long history of Brazilian society's relationship with childhood. Violence against young children has existed since the colonization of Brazil, via the physical and mental indoctrination of indigenous children by the Jesuits. Cases of pederasty and racial prejudices appear in the historical records of a society—Brazil—that founded itself on a patriarchal model. From a judicial point of view, it was only when childhood was consolidated as a social category that the first laws emerged aimed specifically at children. As in European countries and the United States, this process occurred early in the twentieth century. In 1923, the first Brazilian Tribunal for Minors (*Tribunal de Menores*) was established and in 1927 the first Minor Legal Code was promulgated. This landmark consolidation of the doctrine called *irregular situation* was based on a discourse and a practice that preached the necessity of “moral protection” of those children in conditions judged as potential for marginality, particularly children of the poor. Thus the origin of this legislation for childhood reflects and legitimates a repressive relationship with the child, characterized by the concern for social control. In this way it consolidates a culture of penalization of childhood, of marginality and blaming the poor, and of violation of basic rights. The judicial ordinance of the *doctrine of irregular situation* persisted until 1990, when the Statute of the Child and of the Adolescent (ECA) was promulgated.

Violence and Children's Rights

The ECA resulted from the social mobilization that occurred in the process of democratization of the 1980s, and is guided by principles contained in international documents and regulating article 227 of the Federal Constitution. This legal framework proposes a new view of the child, inserting childhood into the arena of human rights. Developed with the support of UNICEF and considered one of the most advanced models for other countries of the world, this legislation introduces the *doctrine of integral protection*, which postulates rights to all children and adolescents, recognizing their particular stages of development. It furthermore establishes a systematic guarantee of basic rights (education, health, protection from work, culture and leisure) and of special protection (to victimized children and adolescents victimized and from the perpetrators of crimes). Two types of public councils are proposed to monitor children's rights: one responsible for the elaboration of the public policies for childhood (Council of Rights) and consisting

of members of the government and civil society; another responsible for admitting or of directing children to the appropriate agencies in cases of violation of basic rights or of victimization (Ward Council), composed of five members elected or appointed by the community. In each municipality there shall be a Rights Council and at least one Ward Council.

Every citizen is co-responsible for the child and has the obligation of reporting rights violations to the Ward Councils. The professionals that deal directly with the children, like those in early childhood education, are particularly relevant to the legislation since, in addition to being promoters of the rights within the ECE settings and in direct relation to the children, they are also obliged to report evidence of abuse and exploitation occurring in the family. However, the fragility of the institutions responsible for following up the cases reported to the Ward Councils generates a situation of helplessness in the responsible professionals, who express fear of reprisals on the part of the abusers since there is no protection after the report and its delivery to the Ward Council.

Although, in the 1990s the development of ECA passed through an intense process, including the participation of the media and of children's rights defense organizations, priority was given to certain themes, such as child labor and adolescents perpetrating infractions. In the ECE field, a document published by MEC entitled "Criteria for a provision that respects children's fundamental rights" (*Critérios para um atendimento que respeite os direitos fundamentais das crianças*) deserves special mention. This document presents principles based on the conception of children's rights both for actions within early childhood settings as well as for the elaboration of policies of early childhood education. The development of this document, which was interrupted in the decade of the 1990s by changes in national policy, is now beginning anew.

Despite the legal advances, there still is a great deal of resistance in relation to the construction of a culture that respects the rights of the child. The existence of a system of guaranteeing rights does not lead directly to a transformation of the life conditions of the Brazilian children. On the contrary, it exposes the historical and cultural complexities and demands the reorganization of activities and practices in the different social spaces, including the educational institutions that are confronting old and new conceptions of the child.

Efforts within Early Care and Education

In the case of early childhood education, there is a lot yet to be done. National policy has not addressed the issue of children's rights and of violence against early childhood with the necessary force and urgency. In the ECE professional preparation courses and in the curricular proposals these themes are not considered.

Localized efforts and advances are documented in different regions of the country. Concrete experiences that have already proved to be more successful are those that seek to organize the institutions by means of Childhood Protection Networks, articulating the day-care centers and preschools with other areas and public and private services. This model expands the possibilities of acting preventively in the process of victimization of the children and at the same time of qualifying, via dialog with partners, the professionals that work in the day-care

centers and preschools. In this qualification, however, one of the main challenges created by ECA needs to be overcome: the need to substitute the conception of the child as an object of attention with one that considers the view of the child as a *subject of rights* and a participant in its own development, on a daily basis and in the execution of pedagogical projects and activities.

Nonviolence and a Peace Culture

Other initiatives that deserve to be highlighted are those that, in contrast to the concept of violence, seek to distinguish constructive reflections based on the concept of nonviolence. It is in the bosom of civil society that the majority of the proposals in favor of a peace culture are born. NGOs, foundations, and movements directed to guarantee the basic rights of children stimulate research and publications that seek to influence public policies, exploring methodologies among the children that allow all to comprehend and expand the knowledge of the child's integral development. The construction of this peace culture, if it is to be effective, requires a multidisciplinary approach and the participation of children and adolescents, family members, educators, and other members of the community. The early childhood education settings, due to the central importance of their activities and their proximity to the family, occupy important and privileged spaces for these activities. Educating for solidarity, building ways of dealing with conflicts not mediated by violence, and breaking down prejudices and intolerance are currently our great challenges for the education of our children in more humanized relations.

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Child Care and Early Childhood Education for 0- to 3-Year-Olds

History

The social movements for the democratization of Brazil, which increased during the military regime (1964–1985), greatly influenced the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. This also brought about great advances in the field of individual and collective rights. As a result, the Constitution recognizes the child and the adolescent as subjects with rights, thus revolutionizing the protective doctrine of previous legislations. It guarantees the universal right to health and education, as well as

assistance to those in need. It also affirms that all workers' children have the right to admission in day-care centers and preschools, extends the period of maternity leave from 90 to 120 days, and creates a paternity leave. It also institutes, as a responsibility of the state, the provision of day-care centers and preschools for children from 0 to 6 years of age. Specific laws regulate these constitutional precepts, including the Statute of the Child and of the Adolescent (1990), the law that establishes the Single Health System (1990), the Organic Law of Social Assistance (1993), and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (1996). It also promoted the decentralization of services of the Union to states and municipalities and the establishment of councils in the various areas: education, health, social assistance, and rights of the child and of the adolescent. Representatives of the government and civil society participate on these councils in establishing the guidelines for public policies and in the follow-up of the services provided.

Health Care Initiatives

In the field of health, a single system has been established that includes the union, the states and the municipalities, as well as private institutions financed by the public sector. Over the last several decades, different actions were introduced to reduce infant mortality and to prevent childhood diseases. Mass vaccinations in childhood were introduced, along with attention to prenatal care. This message about the importance of prenatal care was accompanied by campaigns targeting breastfeeding. Seeking to reach the entire population, the strategy of family visits by community health agents was expanded, providing information regarding basic care, health and hygiene, and child development follow-up. Volunteers of a nongovernmental organization, the "Pastoral da Criança," linked to the Catholic Church, carry out similar work.

These initiatives have resulted in a significant reduction in the infant mortality rate over the last twenty years. In 2003, the rate was estimated at 27.5 per thousand, representing a drop of 60.2 percent from 1980. Even so, Brazil's infant mortality rate is still the third highest in South America (UNICEF, 2005). Infant mortality becomes more serious as the income level and the mother's educational level decrease. Children who are born into low-income families have twice as great a chance of not surviving the first year of their lives than those with higher incomes. Additionally, children with mothers who have only completed three years of schooling have almost double the risk of dying before their first birthday than children of mothers with eight or more years of schooling. The incidence of abdominal Caesarian delivery and pregnancy in adolescence is also higher in these groups.

ECD Programs

Assistance to the most needy families and children is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) and of the Secretariats and Municipal Organs of Social Assistance. MDS designs the assistance policies, and it supports home-shelters (temporary dwellings), services for those with disabilities, and financial help programs for the most needy, especially the "*bolsa-família*" family

aid program. “Bolsa-família” is the main aid program for poor families; “bolsa” means a kind of scholarship for the families. See Poverty entry. The program that supports the maintenance of day-care centers and preschools (public and private nonprofit) that cater to children of low-income families is especially noteworthy. This program consists of a per capita monthly sum provided by the federal government per child attended. Since this per capita value is insufficient, these resources have to be supplemented by other segments of the government and other sources. In 2003, 1,650,608 children aged 0–6 benefited from this program. There are no precise figures regarding how many of these children are in the 0–3 age-group, but we know that the percentage is far lower than for children in the 4- to 6-year-old group (UNESCO, 2003). Because day-care centers were recognized as educational institutions in the Constitution of 1988, negotiations are under way for these resources to be managed by the Education Ministry.

In Brazil, actions in the areas of education, health and assistance for children 0–3 years of age and their families still suffer from past traditions. Instead of a cohesive system of services, emergency measures dominate, which are both overlapping and disjointed. The Councils invoke the importance of articulation of concrete activities in the different areas. However, this articulation is lacking within the various spheres of the government. The Committee of Early Childhood, which functioned between 2000 and 2003 in the precinct of the federal government, took some initiatives in this direction, but this was not a high priority for the organizations involved.

Day-Care Centers and Preschools

The inclusion in the Constitution of 1988 of day-care centers and preschools as a “right to education” reflects a fundamental milestone in Brazil, especially as relates to the day-care centers. This clause in the Constitution provides recognition, on behalf of society, of the right of the child to education in the earliest years of life. Among the factors that contributed to the accomplishment of this recognition were the scientific advancements related to the development of the child, the social movements in support of the child and children’s rights, the women’s movements, movements by administrators and researchers in different areas, and the general social consciousness about the meaning of childhood.

In consonance with this new vision, the Educational Law of 1996 redefines the terms day-care centers and preschool. Whereas earlier day-care centers were meant mainly for children aged 0–6 from low social-economic families, now they are defined as institutions for children aged 0–3, and the preschools are for those aged 4–6. The municipalities are responsible for providing this public provision.

Teacher Preparation

Other important milestones are the requirement that (1) teachers be licensed at a higher level or have completed a course on a secondary level, in the “*Normal*” modality for work in day-care centers as a professional, and (2) that all day-care centers have their operations authorized and supervised by the educational system, as defined by the LDB. Just as in preschools, day-care centers now must develop their pedagogical plans in accordance with the *National Curricular*

Guidelines for Early Childhood Education of 1999 (DCNEI). Specifically for younger children aged 0-3, the document emphasizes articulation with social policies, integration between development and the individual child, social and cultural life, forms of expression (especially oral and corporal) games and play, and the intense and constructive commingling between families and teaching teams. The RCNEI, published by the Ministry of Education in 1998, also supplies specific guidelines for the construction of practices in the day-care centers (see Curriculum entry, below).

The official documents explicitly define conceptions that are consistent with contemporary views of human and child development. The documents explain that children have rights, and that they are complete beings, total and indivisible. However, these official requirements are not generally complied with across the country. Many educational systems are still in the process of restructuring themselves to take on the supervision of the day-care centers, and many of these (as *crèches*) are not regulated. In general they are characterized by practices limited to health care and feeding.

Financing Early Childhood Education

The current pattern of financing the educational sector does not guarantee resources for early childhood education (ECE). As with many social policy initiatives, money is limited and ECE funding competes with other educational programs. The federal resources are limited, and the majority of them are committed to the previously mentioned program of day-care-center maintenance, administered by the MDS (see Country Profile). This financing system contributes to the fact that the day-care centers are identified more with care than with education. As a result, the effective integration of the day-care centers in the educational area is still in process. A new educational financing proposal (FUNDEB) that will also include early childhood education is being discussed in the National Congress (see the Early Childhood Education in Brazil entry, above). Apart from the technical and financial difficulties in the educational sector, low standards of quality exist in many of the institutions, which make it difficult for them to meet the requirements of the educational system.

Research

Recent findings regarding children's day-care-center status (IBGE, 2003) show that 62 percent of registered day-care centers are public (60.5% municipal) and 38 percent private, including nonprofit ones. Regarding coverage, of the 13.8 million children from 0 to 3 years of age in the country, only 11.7 percent attend day-care centers, far from the 30 percent goal stipulated in the National Education Plan to be accomplished by 2006. This percentage decreases as the family's income level falls. The rate of access of the children from 0-3 coming from families with an income under 1/2 MS is about four times less than that found for families with an income bracket between three and five minimum salaries *per capita*.

If we consider this low level of enrollment in day-care centers in the context of a labor market participation rate, which is 51.9 percent for women with children under 2 (only slightly less than the rate of 54 percent in the total population

(IBGE, 2002)) we easily conclude there is a lack of correspondence between child-care provision and the parent's working policies. To remain in the workplace, mothers with young children have sought other child-care solutions, such as family arrangements, home day care, or unregulated day-care centers.

Data from 2004 show that 17 percent of day-care-center professionals lack the minimum preparation. Since the data refers only to the registered institutions, the overall percentage must be higher. The physical condition of the centers and the variety and quantity of materials available in them are also inadequate, according to the ECE Census held in 2000.

There is a great diversity of practices observed in the Brazilian day-care centers: those that emphasize care and those that promote early schooling, those that value the participation of the families and those that do not consider relations with the family as part of their work. At the same time, there are institutions that serve as fine examples of conceptual and practical advancement, including some linked to the public universities, unions, associations, or private entities, in addition to several successful experiences in the public sector.

Although there is not yet a national instrument to evaluate the environments provided specifically in the day-care centers, some municipal networks have developed their own instruments and conduct an annual system of evaluation of the quality of the day-care centers.

In scientific research the field of psychology continues to carry out the greatest number of projects on children younger than 3 years of age in day-care centers. Through the 1970s the role of the affective link between children and significant adults, especially between mothers and their children, and their effects on child development dominated inquiry. Since the 1990s there has been growth in the number of studies and topics, including themes related to adaptation, communication, the meaning of gestures, and the nature of language in interactive situations or in the production of meaning. These studies are showing that children are capable of multiple relations from a very tender age. Studies have also investigated the interaction of the infant and toddler with its immediate surroundings and the relations between the environment and the frequency of babies' interaction.

There is still little research on the development of babies in the collective space of the day-care centers. Recent contributions in psychology, the social sciences, and pedagogy have expanded the understanding of basic childhood processes, including other perspectives, of the children's production of meaning, of their insertion process in the collective spaces, and of the different social roles that they play, as determined by their life contexts (Rocha, 1990; Strenzel, 2001; Rossetti-Ferreira, Amorim, Silva and Carvalho, 2004).

Conclusion

To summarize, the number of child-care places for children under the age of 3 in Brazil is low, the policies and their financing are still fragile, the conceptions of custodial assistance and the resistance to accepting day-care centers as a right continue in many sectors. The educational sector has no consolidated history of provision to this age-group, and the neoliberal policies and the programs proposed by international organizations do not proceed in the same direction

as that achieved through previous successes. There is conflict among the needs of the population, the political and scientific advances, and the decisions of the governmental jurisdictions. Despite these fragilities, the system of care and education for children aged 0–3 is progressing. This can be seen in the policy of the right to services and is present in policy debates and in research. Since this system can easily fall prey to ideologies, maintenance of it requires constant vigilance, care, and commitment.

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Teacher Preparation in Brazil

Brazilian early childhood education has progressed over the course of the past century, ultimately gaining its own legal status. Historically, the development of this field has been affected by a lack of relevant governmental policies, as well as polarization due to the custodial care/instruction/compensatory education divisions within the field of early childhood education. Since the first services for children 0–6 years of age were established in the nineteenth century, two types of institutions have been configured to care for young children: day-care centers, which focus on physical health and care; and nursery schools, kindergartens, and preprimary education classes, which were linked with formal education and incorporated into the official system of education. The training paths for early childhood professionals reflect this dualism.

In the day-care centers, professionals have several designations: including caregivers, monitors, and child development assistants. The people hired to work with young children are, in large part, unspecialized lay workers or have a low educational level, not exceeding the eighth grade of elementary education. Although Brazilian day-care centers have been in existence for nearly a century, prior to the 1990s the few basic training initiatives provided to day-care educators were connected with hygienist and “*puericultura*” programs (child welfare term used in medicine), and were frequently private programs. In addition to receiving poor preparation for their work, these professionals lacked any kind of career or salary plan.

For the teachers in preschools and kindergartens, the training process has historically been merged with that of teacher preparation for the early grades of elementary education (previously primary education). Originally, nursery school and kindergarten teachers were not grouped with teachers trained in “*escola normal*” (basic teacher certification on a secondary level), the training course for teaching in primary education. The selection criteria for these preschool teachers were based on abstract concepts like having the “vocation” for working with children, and defined by the absence of jobs in primary education, resulting in a transitory nature and turnover in the profession. To perform professionally was seen as requiring specific training in certain techniques and pedagogical materials (Froebelian, Montessorian, and Decrolyan) and, in the case of nursery schools, introduction to basic concepts of hygiene.

The National Education Law of 1971: Two Paths of Teacher Training

The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) of 1971 specified two paths of teacher training for preschool: one through high school graduation (secondary education) and the other at the university level.

Secondary Level Preparation. At the secondary level, teacher training specific to preschool takes place in the last year of a four-year teacher preparation course. The curriculum for preschool teacher preparation at this level, as specified by the *Educational National Council Report of 1972*, contains the following four focus subject areas:

- Foundations of Preschool Education, addressing historical, legal, philosophical, and sociological aspects;
- Development of preschoolers, including biological and psychological aspects;
- Didactics of Preschool Education;
- Practice of Preschool Education, including a supervised practicum training period.

A set of additional activities proposed in the law complement the curriculum of this single year of preparation: physical education, with an emphasis on recreation and games; artistic education; and health programs, especially regarding preschool nutrition and hygiene and moral and civic preparation. For those teachers already graduated from a teacher training course for the early grades of primary school it is possible to study for one year in a specific preschool preparation course lasting 720 hours. Although the legislation defines early childhood as extending from 0 to 6 years of age, the contents of the teacher preparation curriculum emphasize work with 5- to 6-year-olds.

Preparation in Higher Education. At the higher education level, the course of pedagogical studies gives peripheral attention to preparing teachers for early childhood education, addressing this education in one or two required subjects or in optional subjects but not allowing sufficient space to consider issues of educational practice. Historically, pedagogy has characterized itself as a course for early childhood education and the first grades of elementary education and administration. The list of topics addressed emphasizes general knowledge of fundamentals, reserving limited space in the curriculum for more specific focus on teaching practice, which in turn is directed at elementary school teaching.

The National Education Law of 1996: Advances and Gaps

The National Law of 1996 affirmed the concept of special preparation for and professionalization of early childhood education (ECE) teachers, in accordance with the acknowledgment of the rights of children 0 to 6 years old to education issued by the Federal Constitution 1988 and reaffirmed by the Statute of the Child and the Adolescent of 1990. The 1996 Law was preceded by publications of the Ministry of Education (MEC), resulting from a series of studies carried out by specialists and professionals in several educational sectors, that proposed a national ECE policy. The major contribution to the thinking regarding teachers' preparation was a publication dedicated especially to the topic: For a Policy of the Preparation of the Early Childhood Education Professional (*Por uma Política de Formação do Profissional de Educação Infantil*).

In accordance with this Law, the preparation of teachers/initial training for basic education should occur on a higher education level, in a full licensure course, offered in universities and institutes of higher education. The Law accepts as minimum preparation for ECE teachers the course on a medium level, in the "Normal" modality (teacher certification on a secondary level). It also specifies programs of continuing education and in-service training, with both in-the-classroom and distance learning approaches.

Secondary Level Preparation. A Federal Resolution of 1999 institutes National Curricular Guidelines for Teacher Preparation in Early Childhood Education and of the first years of Elementary Education, which define the secondary level preparation as the *Normal* modality. This modality of training is aimed at students who have completed their eight years of elementary education. It is to be offered in institutions with their own pedagogical-administrative organization. The duration of the *normal* course shall be at least 3,200 hours, distributed over four school years. The curricular contents of this preparation are quite vague.

Preparation in Higher Education. At this level two possible pathways are foreseen in the National Law of 1996: a *Normal Superior* course of study and the Pedagogy course of study offered in universities, university centers, and institutes of higher education. A proposal for structuring the *Normal Superior* Course is presented in a document issued by the National Council of Education in 2000. There the curricular components for the preparation of both ECE teachers and those teaching in the early years of elementary education are described together. The following areas of didactic content are highlighted: Portuguese Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, History, Geography, Art, and Physical Education. The focus on the traditional school subjects leaves little room for topics specific to early childhood education, especially relative to the 0-3 age-group.

The Pedagogy course of study is addressed by the National Council of Education in the 2005 Resolution Project that institutes the National Curricular Guidelines for Graduation Courses in Pedagogy. Specific training is proposed for licensure in Pedagogy for teaching in Early Childhood Education, involving a course of 2,800 hours of academic work, of which at least 300 hours are to be on-site practicum training. This document, still under discussion, reignites an old controversy in the area of education, between those in favor of a course of study in Pedagogy that is a general preparation for teachers and educational experts in education,

as is now the case, and one with more specific contents directed to each of the educational modalities, including early childhood education.

Uncertainties continue in the field of education regarding the intended profile of the early childhood education professional and the nature of the teacher preparation courses for this area, but advances at the level of legislation are indisputable. However, the legal accomplishments are neither being translated into governmental policies nor into real programs on the ground despite the profusion of documents, often containing progressive ideas. Financing programs provide a good example: they have not been favorable to the institution of a national ECE policy, and this has prevented progress in the preparation of professionals for the area.

Initiatives seeking the specific preparation of teachers for early childhood education are timid. In 2004 the Ministry of Education reported that Brazil currently contains 300,000 teachers in early childhood education. Of these, 12.4 percent do not even possess the minimum secondary school preparation demanded by law. Entry into the profession occurs without the least preparation, especially for working in day-care centers. To meet this demand, in 2004 the federal government signaled the possibility of promoting initial in-service and continuing training for teachers, through the following projects: ProInfantil “Program of Initial In-Service Training of Teachers in Early Childhood Education” and “National Network of Continuing Education of Teachers in Basic Education,” which are in their initial implementation phase.

In several Brazilian states, in-service teacher training initiatives, combining face-to-face and distance learning strategies and technologies, have been developed by means of partnerships between nongovernmental foundations, public and private universities, and the state and municipal governments. These are both secondary and higher level courses, targeting teachers working in day-care centers and preschools, respectively. There are also initiatives by several training centers at the higher education level promoting specific ECE training, in most cases via extension courses.

Related to the search for equity in the ECE teacher preparation processes is the need to institute career and salary plans, ratifying the rhetoric in the National Law of 1996 and other later documents. Very little data is available regarding career patterns and salaries. A document published by the Education Ministry in 2002 indicates the presence of inequities within the municipal network between the salaries of elementary and ECE teachers. There are municipalities in which the salary differences between elementary and ECE teachers involve additional amounts linked to hours of planning and other extracurricular activities. At the level of designation for the director/coordinator, no attention is paid to the legal criterion that establishes a minimum of two years teaching experience as a prerequisite for that position.

Inequities are evident especially in the real world of the day-care centers. Throughout the national territory a fairly irregular professionalization process continues to exist, from the issue of entering the profession to the inadequacies of working conditions, a lack of space and time for studies and for the preparation of long-term educational action plans. Differences in professional profile, denomination, salaries, career plans, and workdays are common.

The great challenge at the moment is to move beyond mere words in the documents, from their intentions to propositions, starting with the fundamental issue of teacher preparation specific to the early childhood education and care, contemplating the specificity of the age bracket of 0–6 years old as a formal part of a national training policy. From this basic need are derived several other issues as yet hardly explored, like work with the family, care and education of the youngest children (0–3 years of age), multiculturalism, and inclusion. Only by addressing these issues will it be possible to achieve the professionalization so needed in early childhood education.

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Curriculum for Early Childhood Education in Brazil

One of the several challenges set for the different agents entrusted with formulating early childhood education (ECE) policies in Brazil today, is the issue of the curriculum. It is one of the structural components of national policy that interacts with a number of policy-relevant issues, including the specific preparation of the ECE professionals, the regulations that specify the qualifications and authorizations for operation of ECE programs, the financial resources invested in ECE resources, and the integration of the work carried out by the day-care centers and preschools within a comprehensive policy for childhood, shouldered jointly by the public agencies and by society in general.

In Brazil early childhood education curriculum has been an area of debate and confrontation involving different views of child, family, and the function of the day-care center and preschool. The idea of a curriculum for early childhood education has not always been accepted as it has been most closely associated with compulsory education for children over 6 years of age. Expressions like “pedagogical project” or “pedagogical proposal” are more often used, especially when dealing with the education of children less than 3 years old.

Until recently, the systematizations of pedagogical experiences with children in day-care centers and preschools in terms of guidelines or general orientations were rare and diffuse. Only in the last decade have official orientations and national references been established to guide the specification of educational programs for these institutions. This has resulted from the inclusion of Early Childhood Education in the sphere of Basic Education defined by the National Educational Law of 1996. This Law defines the goal of ECE as “the integral development of the child up to six years of age, in his/her physical, psychological, intellectual and social

aspects, complementing the actions of the family and of the community.” The importance of structuring and organizing quality educational activities to promote the integral development of the children is articulated with the recognition of the great importance of the professional who works with children 0 to 6 years old in the educational institution. The Law now requires that such professionals attain a medium or upper level of qualification that prepares them for the appropriate social and educational responsibilities (see Teacher Preparation, above). Finally, the Law foresees as one of the requirements of the Federation, in collaboration with the states, D.C., and municipalities, the establishment of competencies, guidelines, and minimum contents, in order to guarantee a common basic curricular formation.

The National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI)

The common norms for ECE practices are defined in the *National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* (DCNEI) instituted in 1999 by the National Council of Education (CNE). These norms specify the principles, foundations, and procedures of ECE. They orient the ECE institutions of the Brazilian educational system in the organization, articulation, development, and evaluation of their pedagogical plan. The *Guidelines* specify the following eight elements for the pedagogical plans:

1. respect for the following guiding fundamentals: *ethical principles* of autonomy, responsibility, solidarity, and respect for the common good; *political principles* of the rights and duties of citizenship, of the exercise of critical thinking, and of respect for democratic order; and *aesthetic principles* of the sensitivity, creativity, playfulness, and diversity of artistic and cultural manifestations;
2. explicit recognition of the importance of the children’s personal identity, their families, teachers, and other professionals, and the identity of each educational unit in the context of their organizations;
3. promotion of educational and caring practices which integrate the physical, emotional, affective, cognitive/linguistics, and social aspects of the child’s development in educational and care practices, the child being conceived as a total being, complete and indivisible;
4. guarantee of the interaction between the diverse areas of knowledge and aspects of citizen life, like basic contents for the constitution of knowledge and values, via activities that are at times more structured and at other times less restrictive;
5. organization of evaluation strategies through the follow-up and documentation of the phases reached in the care and education of children from 0 to 6 years of age, without the objective of promotion, even for access to elementary education;
6. be conceived, developed, supervised, and evaluated by teachers with at least the Teacher Certification Course.
7. be democratically coordinated in their execution,
8. guarantee conditions for the implementation of the educational strategies, with specific reference to physical space, timetable, and calendar, jointly with the internal regulations of each ECE institution.

National Curricular References for ECE (RCNEI)

A document titled *National Curricular References for ECE* (RCNEI) was developed by the Ministry of Education in 1998. Although it differs from the DCNEI in that it is not compulsory, this document guides the development of ECE institutions' curricula and lays out a number of goals to guarantee the integral development of child recognizing his/her rights to childhood as part of his/her rights as a citizen. In addition to some theoretical foundations, the document orients the ECE professionals in important aspects of their practice, including organization of time, use of space and materials, selection and design of subject-matter into blocks, in addition to being concerned with "curricular components" like objectives, contents, didactic guidelines, and general orientation for the teacher. The curriculum contents are organized around two axes: *Personal and social formation*, addressing the processes of children's construction of identity and autonomy and *Knowledge of the world*, the latter divided into six subgroupings: music, movement, visual arts, oral and written language, nature, society, and mathematics.

Related Research

In 1995, the Office of General Coordination of Early Childhood Education in the Ministry of Education carried out a study to identify the pedagogical-curricular guidelines in use in the various units of the Federation. This study pointed out the fragility and the inconsistencies in the majority of the existing guidelines. It also highlighted the multiplicity and heterogeneousness of the proposals and practices in ECE, a characteristic peculiar to Brazilian society. Any national guidelines should take into account multicultural differences at the setting level as they are intersected by severe historical, social, and economic stratification. These guidelines should also guarantee that differences by gender, age-group, ethnicity, culture, and the children with special educational needs are respected. Also such a guideline should guarantee the rights inherent to all the Brazilian children from 0 to 6 years of age, in such a way as to assist with overcoming inequalities. In this sense, the great challenges set at that time were: how to contribute to the educational settings in the reformulation and/or development of its pedagogical plans without supplying ready-made models, how to guarantee respect for diversity and, at the same time, a qualitative unity to the pedagogical plans of the ECE institutions, and how to provide theoretical substance to teachers and to their institutions (Brazil, 1996).

In a way, the DCNEI tried to absorb the recommendations of this study, resulting in specification of general goals without laying down the means by which goals shall be attained. However, it has had very little impact on the teachers and ECE programs, because it was not properly publicized, debated, or followed up with an investment in training and/or supervision that supported its practical implementation and the changing processes that result from them.

The RCNEI was written in another context, intended to be a didactic guide to the ECE professionals. It was well distributed to the ECE institutions

throughout the country. Nevertheless, it has been the object of controversies among academics and experts of the field since its elaboration. Criticisms vary in their concerns. These include the priorities assigned to various contents, the incorporation of teaching models oriented to specific disciplines, and specially the fact that it did not dare to advance beyond the mere issues of the teaching-learning process to include a broad perspective that encompasses a wider and more contextualized perspective of childhood and early childhood education.

Implementation

The Law delegates to the ECE institutions the task of developing their own pedagogical plans, within the general parameters and norms of the educational system. This means that effectively all the Brazilian day-care centers and preschools, public and private, should follow the DCNEI guidelines, which are general in nature. Although the ECE settings may complement them, the basic curriculum and the pedagogical practices are defined by the scope of the ECE institutions, both public and private. At the moment there is no way of evaluating the extent to which the guidelines are being implemented by Brazilian ECE institutions. Although the institutions have total freedom to develop their own pedagogical proposals, in the case of ECE networks, public or private, their technical teams generally define a common pedagogical project, or general lines to be followed.

In practice, the ECE settings and their professionals feel some disorientation. The public settings and those under contract with governmental agencies are especially impacted, due to their lack of knowledge regarding how to develop a pedagogical plan. In that context, the RCNEI has been largely accepted and implemented by professionals in the field, despite the fact that it has been the object of intense controversy in the academic milieu. This general willingness to accept the guidelines by many Municipal Secretariats of Education can be understood as a confluence of many factors: the long tradition of custodial assistance; the absence of early childhood traditions and adequate pedagogical models due to the impact of compensatory educational programs that have accompanied the great expansion of low-cost services that took place in the 1970s; the absence of a policy of specific preparation for ECE professionals; and the dominance of elementary education as the main source of inspiration for preschool education in the country.

Current Tensions

The controversies surrounding the existence or absence of a national curriculum to guide the practices in day-care centers and preschools have made a qualitative improvement when compared to the impasses of the past. These controversies reflect disagreements regarding the functions of ECE in the contemporary world that have yet to be resolved in most other countries. ECE, increasingly considered the first phase in basic education, is viewed by policy-makers on a continuum that ranges from the goal of strengthening children's capacities to assimilate information useful to their future education and life to the idea of creating a socialization context where the child can fully experience childhood

without being submitted to the ritualized practices present in school, home, and health routines. At one end of the continuum the focus of attention is on the teaching-learning relation, keeping in mind the acquisition of basic knowledge and the development of competences and abilities necessary to the child's social integration and future success. From this perspective, the ECE institutions are responsible for promoting the conditions and opportunities of learning, knowledge being linked to a didactic project oriented in the realm of experience or areas of knowledge from a view of disciplines adjusted to the age-groups in question. At the other end, the emphasis falls on the specific activities of ECE, which shares with the family the task of caring for and educating the child and does not associate itself with the same norms and parameters traditionally assigned to compulsory education. This distinction defines the objectives and functions of ECE in a qualitatively different way from those of the school institutions. While the school has as its subject the *pupil* and as its fundamental object *teaching* in the different areas, via *classes*, day-care centers and preschool have as their object *educational relations* locked in a collective living space that has as its subject the child from 0 to 6 years of age (Rocha, 2001). Knowledge, from this perspective, is linked not to didactics, but to the general processes that constitute the development of the child as a human being in different social contexts including its culture, and his or her intellectual, creative, aesthetic, expressive, and emotional capacities. The combination of relations that the child establishes with the natural and social environment, between peers and with the different adults, constitutes the object of the pedagogy of ECE, whose focus is the child, with its unique peculiarities.

When the present federal government policy establishes the goal of nine years of elementary education, including the 6-year-old child in the system of compulsory education, new issues in the national debate on the curriculum are introduced. Firstly, it calls attention to the need to strengthen the interface between ECE and elementary education through integrated planning that respects the temporality of the child of 6 years of age and the separate concepts of education at these two educational levels. From the standpoint of promoting a conceptual connection between the two levels of education to make possible an educational approach that respects the specificities of childhood, the initiative is praiseworthy and desired. However, the risks of pushing the pedagogical standards of formal education down into the preschool years are great if we consider that ECE is still a fragile area constructing its own culture. The challenge is to transcend the adult-centered culture, and work, above all, on the sensitivity of the professional to comprehend the situations through the child's eyes.

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Lenira Haddad and Zilma Ramos de Oliveira

Creativity and Imagination

The concepts of “imagination” and “creativity” are discussed here in terms of their relevance to shaping the child as a human, a historical, and a cultural subject. This relevance has strong implications for pedagogy. Imagination and creativity are discussed as they are significant and situated within the official Brazilian principles and goals. The application of these principles and goals is then considered within the daily reality of early childhood education programs.

Defining the Concepts

Imagination and creativity are defined as the abilities to visualize new ways of thinking and acting. These possibilities are conceived of through visual, auditory, plastic, tactile, spatial, and verbal images. Creative individuals integrate emotion, perception, intuition, and cognition as they examine the significance of humans in relation to the world. Because imagination and creativity are human dimensions, they develop within a cultural context and are shaped in the exercise of life itself. Imagination and creativity are present in the work of every individual, but are most evident in the activity of the scientist, the artist, and the child. As conscious beings, humans are compelled to understand life and to create. Creativity is the essence of humanity; an incessant process of developing, restructuring, and deepening life experiences. We see this process in the development of great artists and in the growth of children.

Creativity in Childhood

Creativity manifests itself in the unbound, diffuse, and spontaneous activities of children. Through play, children make associations and create symbols to better understand their world. For the child, creating is living. Children are in a state of continual physical, psychological, emotional, and cognitive transformation. These changes sharpen their attentive and experimental spirit. In childhood, life itself is an adventure, and children see a world to be conquered.

Children establish a sensory and aesthetic relationship with reality through a process of perceiving, imagining, and creating. Their relationship to the real world is profoundly rooted in culture and in the sensitive forms of reality. As children

engage in the world, they grow, make meaning, and find affirmation. In this way, children meet the world and the world meets the children's needs.

Children adjust themselves to the social world of their elders, whose external interests are carried out through the rules of society. Children also come to understand the physical world. According to Jean **Piaget**, children need to adapt to these social and physical realities and find an emotional and intellectual balance. Children will naturally adapt an activity to their own perception of reality, without reinforcement or sanctions. Through children's play, what is real is transformed because of the need to make meaning. Assimilation and accommodation of external models help children understand and think about their world.

The young child lives in a world of infinite possibilities and is far more curious and adventurous than an older child. Despite limitations in dealing with complex logical relations, young children possess a symbolically intuitive, imaginative, and creative thinking ability that allows them to establish powerful analogies. If this initial ability to make connections is fomented, it may become part of their cognitive processes and cognitive structures. As children develop, they are more apt to think in inventive, perspicacious, and flexible ways. It is significant to recognize that the origins and the foundations of creative thought are established in these early moments of affirmation.

Imagination in early childhood. In early childhood, imagination is constituted as the first form of thought. According to Lev **Vygotsky**, imagination is a new psychological process for the child; it represents a specifically human form of conscious activity. It arises first in the guise of play, which is imagination in action.

Imagination arises from the child's action and encounter with the material and perceptible world. Through fantasy and multiple forms of experimentation, the world becomes more apparent and the child's imagination is engaged. The child establishes a relationship with the surrounding culture through imaginative thinking. By imagining, she/he is affected by what is perceived of the culture and simultaneously defines the culture based on what is perceived. Thus, the child begins to make meaning of experience by imagining. Through imagination, the child is the protagonist of his/her own story. Creation can then be seen as individual acts, immersed in the collective context of interpersonal and cultural relationships.

Children's imaginations are an inexhaustible source of ideas and projects. Using the languages of play, painting, drawing, sculpture, music, literature, and others, the child gains new creative skills and expressive possibilities. Children's imaginations expand and connect to their cultural-historical knowledge. This understanding is necessary as they begin to construct their personal and cultural identities.

Importance in Current Contexts

Imagination and creativity are human dimensions that have always been present in the field of early childhood education (ECE) in Brazil. But how and where they are relevant have not been clearly defined. Creativity and imagination are terms that appear in official documents and in the discourse of educators during

different historical moments. They are associated with young children's curiosity as exhibited in their playful and expressive behavior. By putting faith in humanity's creative and imaginative power, these terms reflect a democratic and humanistic concept of education.

A look at pedagogy: why now? At the present time, a deeper discussion of these concepts has been developing. This current conversation points to the fact that imagination and creativity are crucial to the process of the constitution of the child as a historical and cultural human subject. Therefore, they are also crucial to the pedagogy of childhood. The pedagogy that emphasizes imagination and creativity, considers children as the author of their childhood. Creation gives the child the possibility to express his/her voice in multiple languages. This pedagogy considers the child's expression, action, and imagination as axes of educational practice.

A new vision in Brazilian pedagogy. We currently seek to solidify childhood education as a right of all Brazilian children and their families, and to improve the quality of the pedagogical projects provided for them, as stated in the different legal documents referring to ECE (Constitution of 1988, LDB of 1996, DCNEI 1999). As we work toward this goal, one aim is to recover what is known about imagination and creativity. We are faced with a pedagogical tradition that is either driven by concerns of social assistance or focuses narrowly on the child's schooling at a very early age. The challenge is to counteract these traditions with a pedagogy that places a high regard on play and aesthetics. This pedagogy values the expressive languages appropriate to the needs of the child, and the child's appropriation of cultural knowledge in a way that is meaningful and emancipating, as he/she develops. Imagination and creativity play a leading role both for children and for educators.

Imagination and creativity are terms that now inspire the construction of a pedagogy that respects the rights of both children and educators. A new kind of work in education, in which childhood may be fully experienced, should develop at day-care centers and preschools. This requires the development of high quality programs for teacher preparation, which will help educators to better understand and work more in-depth with all the human dimensions of young children.

National Positions on Imagination and Creativity in Early Childhood Education

The work with imagination and creativity in ECE acquires an even broader social dimension when we take into account the deep economic and social inequalities that have left their mark in Brazil. According to Paulo Freire and Maxine Greene, when imagination and creativity are put to use in the service of democratic social projects, they can lead to great transformations.

Rights to creativity and imagination. Over the last few decades, official documents have incorporated imagination and creativity as essential aspects in early childhood education. In *Critérios para um Atendimento em Creches que Respeite*

os Direitos Fundamentais das Crianças (MEC 1995) (*Criteria for Daycare Centers Child Caring that Respects Children's Fundamental Rights*), children are assured of their "right to develop their curiosity, imagination, and capacity of expression in the service of the construction of their cultural, racial and religious identity." This right is linked to "the right to a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment which includes contact with nature; individual attention, with the guarantee of essential attention to cleanliness, health and healthy food, to protection, affection and friendship, with special attention given to the child during the period of adaptation; the right to play as the foremost form of expression, developed in different languages and cultural manifestations."

In these statements creativity and imagination are understood as broad and integrating concepts. By establishing creativity and imagination as rights, the mechanisms necessary for implementing this pedagogy in educational practice is being valued.

National Curricular Guidelines

The 1999 National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI) include the following among their guiding principles:

- aesthetic principles of sensitivity, creativity, playfulness, and the diversity of cultural and artistic manifestations
- ethical principles of autonomy, solidarity, and respect for the common good
- political principles regarding the rights and duties of citizenship, the exercise of critical reasoning, and respect for the democratic order

The DCNEI understands and demonstrates that these principles are interdependent.

Imagination and creativity have been the subject of different publications, translations, seminars, and training courses for childhood educators over the last decade in Brazil, demonstrating their importance for childhood education and for teachers' education. These publications highlight for teachers how work with play and expressive languages links to the genesis of knowledge construction, the appropriation of culture, and the constitution of the child as a human subject. They indicate that educators need and deserve aesthetic experiences in the arts and sciences. In teaching and learning, aesthetic experiences expand the teacher's creative ability with the children, if they are included in the daily reality of the school or day-care center.

Current Challenges in Creative Curriculum

An analysis of the current practices in Brazil's ECE programs reveals an enormous distance between official statements and declarations and actual reality. The national documents value imagination and creativity, but Brazilian programs frequently standardize activities, which are centered on the teacher.

Problems leading to standardized teaching. Teacher training has not prepared teachers to understand the dynamics involved in the processes of knowledge

construction, appropriation of culture, and child development. Teachers face difficult working realities, due to overpopulated classes and unsatisfactory physical and material conditions. As a consequence, teachers' work is devoted mainly to containing and controlling the children. These circumstances greatly hinder the possibilities for creative, imaginative thought and action.

Building a more independent pedagogy in the face of insufficient materials, precarious working conditions, and inadequate training is a difficult challenge for teachers. But in order to use imagination and creativity in the interests of cultural empowerment and creation, this pedagogy is necessary. We see the lack of specific training for teachers in the artistic languages, so essential to early childhood, as another major problem for educators.

A cultural paradox. Brazil is a country whose ethnic diversity is unparalleled, a country rich with artistic and cultural manifestations. In a country where Carnival, one of its most important national cultural manifestations, is also one of the most well-known cultural celebrations in the world, why isn't creativity and individuality more valued in school? We can see that a major paradox exists in Brazil, where the national cultural reality is separated from the artificial culture of its schools.

Moving Forward

We can see a strong and increasing movement, present in both public and private educational institutions, toward the implementation of programs that value imagination and creativity. These programs are making it possible to integrate imagination and creativity into their curriculum. Programs are organizing educational spaces, materials, and proposals so that children are invited to act, interact, think, and express themselves in creative, imaginative ways. Projects are introduced that consider diverse artistic expressions. With a view toward appropriating knowledge and producing children's cultural manifestations, many different cultural institutions such as art and science museums, libraries, and theaters, are being integrated into educational projects.

Experiences such as these are structured by means of relationships. These relationships have constructed a balance of power. They are founded on rules of mutual respect that favor the shared involvement of adults and children in the development of a curriculum in action, where imagination and creativity play a leading role. Play and expression are valued in all their dimensions. Through activities such as make-believe playing, building, painting, and clay modeling, and experiences with music, dance, puppets, storytelling, computer activities, and nature, children form relationships with their world. All these activities are incentives to experiment, invent, and imagine. These experiences expand the child's repertory of existential, human, artistic, and cultural experiences. It is then possible for the child to build an identity that is investigative, strong, sensitive, participative, and solidly established in relation to the world.

The expansion of a program that values imagination and creativity can be seen as one of the current challenges that Brazil must face in early childhood education.

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Marina Célia Moraes Dias

Play

Play as a Societal Value

In the general context of society there is a strong play culture in Brazil. Children play in their homes, their backyards, in condominiums, parks, and on the tranquil streets of towns in the interior. There are cultural events in museums that exhibit memories, paintings, and sculptures that value playing. There has also been a considerable advance in the inclusion of play on a theoretical plane, in research, in public policies and a strong indication of innovations in pedagogical practices. Play projects aimed at the child population conducted through public policies have utilized circuses, itinerant buses that transport toys and stimulate games in streets and common areas, workshops producing toys, courses and activities integrating music, dance, theater, and the visual arts with play, all as forms of manifestations of childhood culture throughout the country. In hospitals, with the admission of the children comes respect for their right to play, with the recent approval of a legal measure making this compulsory for children living under hospital care. Nongovernmental organizations, working with private companies and with toy manufacturers interested in providing social programs for children (especially low-income children), have stimulated the creation of toy-playing centers around the country and have promoted social events in which playing is the object of attention. The creation of specialized publications, early childhood education (ECE) magazines, and the publicizing of the right to play have stimulated research and practices on play. The expansion of higher level courses to train early childhood education teachers and the multiplication of *brinquedotecas*/toy-playing centers since the 1980s, in addition to the creation of toy museums in the 1990s, are other factors that stimulate the importance of play. Specific to Brazilian educational culture at present is the recovery of regional traditional childhood cultures of play, and the introduction of toy-playing centers in universities, children's schools, hospitals, and population centers.

Play in the Context of Early Childhood Education Settings

Despite the focus on play by the society as a whole, in the majority of the ECE institutions the idea of play as a free activity, with imaginary elements, initiated and maintained by the child, perhaps with rules, varying in time and space, related to a process and to learning, is often obscured by other conceptions of play; play as a reward, as rest from structured activities, as a way of filling time, as a recreational activity, under adult supervision and not of great importance.

The inclusion of ECE as the first phase of basic education in the public educational system (see earlier entries) led to a spate of documents aimed at improving the quality of childhood education, where respect for the child's rights, especially of playing, are defended. The concern with the quality of childhood education, resulting in efforts to improve teacher training for day-care centers and preschools, has generated a conception of education that integrates playing as the mediator in the child's development.

In Brazil, the introduction of Froebelian kindergartens at the end of the nineteenth century brought the first concerns about games as pedagogical instruments predominating over skill and job-related activities. Teachers that worked in kindergartens during the first decades of the twentieth century, like Alice Meirelles Reis and Helena Antipoff, demonstrated pedagogical practices with free and directed play, drawing upon other references such as John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Agazzi, and Decroly. However, fragmented activities like copying letters and numbers, drawings and graphic exercises prevail in the majority of the pedagogical practices in the twentieth century.

Academic Interest in Play

The increase in scientific research on play in the 1970s resulted from factors like the creation of the national system of postgraduate education and research, the expansion and insertion of early childhood education into the public system of education, the increase in teacher training courses at this level of education, the expansion of discussions on play in the pedagogical approaches to childhood, the circulation of studies and research on play in congresses, websites, specialized journals, teacher training courses, and the emphasis on the right to play by public policies. In the 1970s, when postgraduate training was structured into the nation's higher education system, the first postgraduate discipline on play was introduced within the Institute of Psychology at the University of São Paulo (USP). In the following decades, research associations began to release the findings of studies carried out on play. For instance, in a survey of researches on play carried out by Bomtempo, in the area of psychology, conducted in the period between 1970 and 1995, play-related topics were found with the following frequencies: role-playing (44.5%), preferred play (16.7%), turbulent play (13.9%), free and gender play (11.3%).

Reflecting the pattern in the foreign literature, Brazil has also observed the increase of studies on "role play" in the areas of education and psychology,

highlighting its influence on cognition, creativity, and language, with a greater emphasis on the action of playing itself and less on objects that give support to play. In a study that reviewed research on early childhood education by Brazilian social and human services researchers presented at annual congresses between 1990 and 1996, Rocha identified thirty-eight works on games, and classified them as follows: pretending (29%); psychological, historical, or anthropological representation (26%); space (24%); teacher training (18%); and language (13%), along with others with smaller percentages (interaction, children with special needs, preference for toys, gender, social class, objectives of childhood education, and theoretical approaches).

From the point of view of learning and the development of the child, the theories that stand out in these studies are those formulated by Lev **Vygotsky**, A.R. **Luria**, **Leontiev**, **Wallon**, and also **Jean Piaget**, **Jerome Bruner**, and **Friedrich Froebel**. The recognition of the mediator role of the child's play in its relation to the world stimulates studies that show play as a pivot of pedagogical practice in ECE. Increasingly studies utilize the conceptions of **Brougère** in a sociological perspective and feminist theories to understand toys and play in an analytic perspective that considers ethnic, religious, and gender differences, and which denounces the prejudices existing in the child's daily routine.

As a result of this research, public and private universities and different organizations have created projects involving the construction of toys, stimulating social activities that seek to recover the local culture of play and have released their experiences on websites. The practice instituted in 1984, by the Laboratory of Toys and Pedagogical Materials of Faculty of Education of USP, of including toy-playing centers as an area for research, training, and community services, has been highlighted as meritorious in the national evaluation of teacher training courses on a superior level.

Play and Children with Special Needs

In the area of children with special educational needs, play-related initiatives are under way in organizations like the Association of Parents and Friends of Exceptional Children (APAE) and in other centers addressing multiple disabilities throughout the country. The public and private universities in several states are conducting studies on play and the acquisition of language, anchored in interaction processes, related to physical space and materials. Worth highlighting, among others, are programs in São Paulo with virtual Braille containing digital games that provide free instruction in the Braille language to sighted people. Educational toys for all the modalities of needs are introduced in specialized courses, as occur in Marília, in the state of São Paulo. Institutions like the Fundação Laramara, the Instituto Padre Chico, the Fundação Dorina Nowill, and the Centro de Reabilitação de Cegueira Dr. Newton Kara José (Blind Rehabilitation Center), have stimulated the use of games for the blind. Groups installed in Rio de Janeiro and public and private institutions of São Paulo transmit digital games, and educational toys for the deaf have been developed in Rio Grande do Sul.

Play and Pedagogy

The relationship between play and the pedagogical proposals for ECE has stimulated criticism of approaches that are primarily cognitive in nature. Studies in several fields, including Education, Psychology, Arts and Linguistics, have stimulated the integration of play with speech, graphics, gestures, and mathematical languages in the activities experienced by children. In this process the educators, influenced by the constructivist or social-constructivist perspective, are supported by Bachelard, who sees daydreaming as the act of playing with thought; by Bruner, for whom it is playing with words that provides narrative thinking; and by Bakhtin and Benjamin, who point out the pleasure of meaning whether in the sketch of a child's drawing or in the words created as expressions of the childhood culture.

The discussion of curricular approaches like Reggio Emilia, High/Scope, Freinet, the Pedagogy of Projects, among others, has expanded the presence of the toy and play in the discussions and the processes of professional training, but with little evidence of permanent impacts on the quality of play in pedagogical practice.

The gap between investigation and innovation and pedagogical practice can be attributed to the resistance of the schooling and institutional culture, which does not focus on the specific child, and to the educational policies that do not maintain successful programs and that preserve the structural problems related to adult-child ratio, financial resources, time, space, materials, and training of the teachers.

The physical space of the ECE institutions, although recognized within the theoretical plan as the environment of learning that leads to the playful exploration of material in the physical world and that must guarantee the right to play as part of the pedagogical plan, does not always retain these meanings in practice. Materials like sand, water, soil, leaves, flowers, paints, plasticines, foodstuffs, scrap materials, cardboard boxes, and toys are beginning to be understood by teachers, timidly, as important resources to relate play to learning. But there is difficulty with their organization, and in many cases the tendency is to use play with the goal of transmitting knowledge. In the institutions that place priority on the practice of taking care of the child, where there are no organized activities with and for the children, there are few materials in a world of few interactions. In others, time for fragmented activities dominates, with little time for playing. In the majority of institutions there is not coherence between conceptions and practices.

Structural Problems

The lack of resources invested in early childhood education, which results in inadequate adult-child relationships, the absence of objects and toys, and the organizing of space more for collective control than for promoting exploration in dyads, triads, etc., impedes the permanent inclusion of play practices in day-care centers and preschools. Another difficulty is the frequent acquisition of miniature toys, which are inadequate both for collective use, due to their fragility for use by small children, and because they restrict the play to individual practices.

In the experience of many municipalities, the effort to expanding the play space in ECE institutions results in the practice of using toys in one room named a toy-playing center, but within a conception that shows little comprehension of the more general role of playing in an educational setting. These rooms usually are maintained as toy demonstration windows or are used only for directed activities. Even if they are used for childhood play the toy-playing centers are often utilized on a shift schedule, due to the great quantity of children, and so are available only on a weekly or biweekly basis for each age-group.

The inclusion of play in the pedagogical practices requires the adoption of constructivist or social-constructivist conceptions that are not present in the majority of Brazilian academic and institutional cultures and that depend on the professional training and the solution of structural problems of organization and functioning in the ECE institutions. From the perspective of teacher training, the systematic observation of and listening to the children in play situations has increasingly been pointed out as essential for understanding how play is associated to childhood learning, development, and culture, and thus how play can be included appropriately within educational practices.

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Tizuko Morchida Kishimoto

Inclusive Education in Brazil

History

At the end of the World War II, concern about human rights triggered a renewed focus on human values, which resulted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Created in 1948, this Declaration affirmed, among other things, the right of all people to education. However, the Declaration did not give visibility to the disabled, who were segregated and denied access to an education that considered their specific needs. In 1975, the UN General Assembly approved the Declaration of Rights of Disabled People, for the first time fully expressing the needs of disabled people and formally recognizing their citizen rights and duties. In that decade, the National Movement in Defense of Disabled People's Rights gained force in Brazil. One of the Movement's main objectives was to replace the existing segregated educational system with an integrated one in which disabled people could commingle in regular schools. This concept of integration was ruled by the idea of normalcy, and its goal was to "modify the person with

special educational needs, that this person could be as similar as possible to the other citizens, so this person could be included and integrated into a commingling within society.” To this end, special classes were created in schools (partial integration), with the purpose of preparing the child for total integration in regular classes, which would only occur once he or she was capable of following the curriculum.

In 1990, upon agreeing with the Worldwide Declaration of Education for All, signed at the UNESCO World Conference, Brazil formally announced its decision to create an inclusive educational system. In 1994, upon signing the Declaration of Salamanca, Brazil reaffirmed this commitment, giving visibility to Special Education. Since then, the Brazilian educational system has been in a process of deep transformation, resulting in changes in the legislation and in the development of national guidelines for education. All these changes have been oriented around the idea of inclusive education.

The idea of *inclusion* is an advance beyond the unilateral “the child must change” perspective, toward a bidirectional process, involving actions both on the part of those people with special educational needs and on the part of society: “instead of presupposing that the pupil must adjust to the standards of ‘normalcy’ to learn, it appoints the school the challenge of adjusting itself to respond to the diversity of its pupils.” Instead of only focusing on the limitations, difficulties, and/or disabilities of children, inclusion considers the human dimension. The concept of inclusion goes beyond merely bringing the child to school. On the contrary, it implies a posture of involving, comprehending, learning, and building new possibilities.

The concept of special education has also undergone deep changes. Instead of focusing only on the development of competences and abilities of the person with special educational needs the concept has shifted to a concern with how special education can contribute to the construction of an inclusive society for everyone.

National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education

The National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education issued in 2001 by the National Council of Education define special education as follows:

An educational process defined in a pedagogical proposal, ensuring a set of special educational resources and services, organized institutionally to support, complement, supplement and, in some cases, substitute the regular educational services, in order to guarantee school education and promote the development of the potential of the pupils that present special educational needs, at all levels, phases and modalities of education.

The conception of *special* refers to the criterion of meaningful difference in relation to what is normally provided to the pupils in a regular school, where the special educational needs are defined as those that “require from the school a series of resources and support of a more specialized character, that provide the pupil means of access to the curriculum.” These needs may result from high

abilities or difficulties to learn, and are not associated with the condition of the disability.

Understanding special education in this context provides an opportunity for any child to have his or her specific needs recognized, whether they are transitory or not, and it creates the demand for solutions that are also specific to and adequate for each situation. This conception demands flexibility and the capacity for reflection on practice, which is only possible when there is involvement and good working conditions for the teachers.

These guidelines determine that the schools should enroll all the special need pupils and organize themselves to provide them quality provision in regular classes. They indicate the importance of considering the unique bio-psychosocial situations and characteristics of those being educated, in order to ensure their requisites with respect and human dignity, and the development of their identity and citizenship. The guidelines recommend that educational intervention for pupils requiring special support be provided as soon as possible, which shall make it more effective in the long run. In this sense, admission to early childhood education (ECE) is understood as preventive and desirable for children with special needs. They also recommend reflection, the exchange of experiences amongst the protagonists of the educational action and a search of partnerships with institutes of higher education and research, seeking to develop a theoretical elaboration on inclusive education.

Education and Care for Seriously Handicapped Children

For children that are seriously handicapped and who could not benefit from the common curriculum, a functional curriculum shall be considered. This curriculum emphasizes the development of social competences. The education of children with special needs may require few curricular adaptations (small adjustments in the planning or organization of the classroom) or significant ones. The document further anticipates the need for pedagogical support services in the day-care centers and preschools, which would help identify a child with special needs. Additionally, such identification may promote more curricular flexibility and adaptation with alternative pedagogical practices. This service may be provided in an itinerant fashion, developed by a teacher specialized in special education and ECE, or through resource classrooms, where the specialized teacher would carry out complementary and/or supplementary curricular activities with small groups, as an alternative to the school routine.

Also foreseen to consolidate the process of inclusion is the creation of *early intervention services* from birth to three years of age, in specialized institutions, whose admission shall be complementary to (and not a substitute for) the day-care center or preschool. It is understood that these admissions are essential to promote the development of potentialities present in this early childhood period, and that they shall be integrated with the health and social action areas.

Admission to ECE may also be made in *special schools* in those cases in which it is necessary to provide "intense and continuous help and support, and when the need for curricular adaptations is so significant that the common school cannot provide them." Some studies challenge this idea and point out, specifically in

ECE, that it is possible to create conditions for the admission of all the children in the regular day-care centers and preschools, in a manner that brings benefits to all the children (Sekkel, 2003). *Hospital class* and *family home care* are special admission possibilities, on a temporary basis, in situations where health treatment hinders attendance at a regular school.

Nevertheless the Guidelines as well as the National Education Plan have been treating special education as a chapter aside of the national education. The absence of a specific treatment of special education in early childhood education causes it to remain as a topic for specialists only and impedes educators from engaging in the discussion, generating a feeling of helplessness and paralysis of action.

Support for Implementation

In 2003 the Secretariat of Special Education of the Ministry of Education (MEC/SEESP) published the collection *Saberes e Práticas da Inclusão—Educação Infantil (Knowledge and Practices of Inclusion Early Childhood Education)*, composed of nine volumes that discuss specific themes in the education of children from birth to six years of age with special needs. The topics covered in this collection are the following:

- An introduction covering the concepts of inclusive education for the programs and goals of ECE
- Profound Learning Difficulties or Limitations in the Development Process
- Profound Learning Difficulties—Autism
- Profound Learning Difficulties—Multiple Disabilities
- Difficulties of Communication and Signaling—Physical Disability
- Difficulties of Communication and Signaling—Deaf and Blind/Multiple Sensorial Disabilities
- Difficulties of Communication and Signaling—Deafness
- Difficulties of Communication and Signaling—Visual Disability
- High abilities / Gifted / Superior Abilities

These volumes, available on the site of the Ministry of Education (www.mec.gov.br), have helped nationwide to fill a fundamental gap between implementation of inclusive education, the supply of important technical support for inclusive practices, and initial and continued in-service preparation of ECE teachers.

Research

The data provided by the Secretariat of Special Education shows that the number of special needs pupils enrolled grew from 201,142 in 1996 to 500,575 in 2003. According to the School Census of 2003 inclusive admissions in Brazil grew from 24.7 percent in 2002 to 28.7 percent in 2003 while enrollment in the special classes diminished from 75.3 percent to 71.3 percent. However, the data available is very general, not allowing for deeper analyses or identification of the challenges faced by the families or schools involved.

The National Education Plan itself recognizes the lack of knowledge regarding the real circumstances facing special needs students in the educational process. Complete statistics on the number of people with special needs and the quality

of the education provided to them simply isn't available. Until the 1990s there were no official data at all on Brazil's disabled population. The Population Census of 1991 included, for the first time, questions regarding the disabled population, but the methodology utilized was faulty and compromised interpretation of the data. The Population Census of 2000, relying on the technical assistance of the *National Coordination for the Integration of Disabled People* (CORDE) utilized an expanded concept of disability, compatible with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health, provided by the World Health Organization and recommended as the theoretical benchmark by the United Nations. In this census 14.5 percent of the Brazilian population identified themselves as having some kind of disability, which amounts to 24.5 million people. Of this total 48.1 percent are visually disabled, 22.9 percent motor disabled, 16.7 percent hearing disabled, 8.3 percent are mentally deficient, and 4.1 percent have physical disabilities. In 2004, CORDE published a report, based on data obtained in twenty-one Brazilian cities that highlighted the close relationship between social inequalities and these incapacities, and emphasized the need for social policies that positively identify the population with disabilities.

The amount of ECE research in this arena is not impressive, and in general shows the feelings of abandonment and isolation suffered by teachers and other ECE professionals who work with special needs children. It also allows us to foresee the great advance that inclusion represents for the construction of a humane society. The pioneering experiences developed at the Creche/pre-escola Oeste (Western Daycare center) of the University of São Paulo show the impact that the inclusive ECE proposal has had on the lasting transformation of attitudes in the children, parents, teachers, and employees, caused by the collective confrontation of the attitudinal barriers that result from the influence of the stereotypes and prejudices regarding disabled people. The construction of an inclusive ambience, sensitive to the individual and group issues, articulating channels of participation at all levels, proved to be fundamental for the collective construction of an inclusive educational project.

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Gender and Equity: A Brazilian Perspective

The Concept of Gender

In Brazilian dictionaries, the term gender is defined as a way of classification and a means of real or imaginary expression of the characteristics of human beings, with emphasis on the stereotypes attributed to each sex. Beginning in the 1980s the concept of gender began being incorporated by sociology with reference to social organization in the relation between the sexes. The elaboration of this concept also received and still receives considerable attention in areas of knowledge such as linguistics, psychoanalysis, psychology, history, and anthropology, with anthropologists credited with demonstrating the cultural variability of the behaviors considered masculine and feminine. These findings have demonstrated that the masculine and the feminine are understood as shaped fundamentally by the culture as well as by biology. In the 1990s in Brazil, the studies of the American historian Joan Scott had a significant influence on the studies of gender and on critical reflections on education. Her work provided a greater understanding of sexual differences and the multiple meanings that this knowledge acquires in various socialization contexts, including the institutions responsible for education.

However, for a long time the focus of gender issues was limited to the conditions faced by women, which made the political consolidation of the concept of gender difficult, rejecting a dynamic and dialectic vision of the social relations between men and women. Even today both in the political and the academic realms, attention to gender is sometimes limited to a focus on women. At the same time, among those that defend the relational dimension of gender there is the risk of restricting the analysis to a single standard of masculine and feminine, immutable and polar. At present the adoption of a gender perspective, whether in academic studies or in the policy arena, requires the recognition that men and women are not equal, the relations that they establish are asymmetrical, there is no single model of masculinity or femininity, and the relations of power touch on relations between women themselves as well as between women and men. Thus gender must be associated with the dynamics of social transformation, and with meanings that go beyond the bodies and the sexes and that which supports the notions, ideas, and values in the different areas of social organization. These meanings are found in the culturally constructed and visible symbols of masculinity and femininity, heterosexuality and homosexuality, in the development of normative concepts within the scientific, political, and judicial fields, in the formulation of public policies that are implemented in social institutions like day-care centers and preschools, and in subjective and collective identities.

Gender and Early Education

The incorporation of the concept of gender in education starts with recognition of its fundamentally social character, and the way that it has been constructed historically around inequalities based on physical and biological differences. This orientation sometimes challenges the supposedly fixed and polar character of categories such as feminine and masculine. In the case of the early childhood

education (ECE), the issue of gender was powerfully present during the 1980s in the construction of policy directed at early childhood care and education, and influenced propositions for the preparation of professionals and the academic undertakings of that period. By the end of the 1990s the gender perspective associated with development of ECE policies had shifted more to the interior of the institutional spaces, with concerns more directed to childhood socialization, development, and learning.

Gender and Early Childhood Education Policies

The insertion of the perspective of gender in ECE is the result of changes that permeated the entire process of redemocratization of Brazilian society over the last four decades, the legal manifestation of which, apart from direct elections for the presidency of the Republic, has been development of the Federal Constitution of 1988. The latter brought to an end a period characterized by the violation of human rights under the protection of a dictatorial government, and guaranteed the recognition of the demands of various social movements, including the women's movement; marked above all by reflections initiated in 1975 with the first Women's Worldwide Conference organized by the UN in Mexico. The women's movement engaged itself in the Constitutional Campaign, with the objective of assuring rights and guarantees for women's equality within the constitutional text. At that time, the National Council of Women's Rights (CNDM), created in 1985, and the State Council on the Conditions of Women (CECF), in São Paulo, played an important role in the introduction of the theme of sexuality and gender in ECE.

Faced with the intense process of urbanization of the 1970s and 1980s and the necessity of intensifying their involvement in the labor market and facilitating redistribution of domestic and family responsibilities between the sexes, women managed to introduce ECE as a right by using an argument that brought together the issues of paid work, gender equality, child care, and education. In this sense, the recognition by the Constitution of maternity as a social function and of the duty of the state to guarantee extra-familial care and assistance through day-care centers and preschools for 0- to 6-year-old children represented a significant advance in social policy and in the promotion of gender equity in Brazil. Thus Brazilian feminism views the day-care-center proposal through a double lens: both as a woman's right to day-care center and to preschool for her children and as an achievement of the child's right, whether poor or rich, to an educational and pedagogical setting and to extra-familial care as an effective means of articulating family with occupational and social responsibilities. The right of every child to early childhood education, through day-care centers and preschools, also meant the expansion of citizenship and became a turning point in the history of the social construction of this subject of rights: the young child.

Neoliberal Reforms

Beginning in the mid-1990s, these legal advances were restrained by the neoliberal reforms that followed, with less state participation and the restriction of

the social and work policies. Some advances were maintained, as in the case of equity between the sexes with respect to admission into early care and education programs. In 2001, 531,102 girls and 562,245 boys attended day-care centers and 2,372,038 girls and 2,446,765 boys preschools. However, Article 7 of the Constitution, which called for free admission to day-care centers and preschools for the children or dependents of rural and urban workers as a social right, has not been enforced. The educational policy, which was not based on a tradition of viewing ECE from the perspective of sharing child care with the family, also applied the logic of the liberal reform that allowed for no increase in costs. There was no effort to direct resources to the improvement of teacher salaries or to the broad provision of day-care centers, as foreseen in the Constitution. The proposed creation of a day-care-center salary (*salario-crèche*) was defeated in the voting process of the National Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), which was approved in 1996.

This defeat was aggravated by new educational financing rules, and especially the law that created the FUNDEF, a measure of the federal government that modified the Constitution by giving priority to elementary education as the primary investment in national education (to detriment of ECE and the education of youth and adults) (see Country Profile). This political context results today in a situation where less than 40 percent of Brazilian children are enrolled in day-care centers and preschools, still far from the ideal, and in the priority given to part-time admission of children aged 0–6, instead of to full-time admissions. The expansion of ECE as the first phase of basic education, without the social component that articulates family responsibility and duty to the state and a guarantee of the extra familial care and assistance (a part of feminist demand for day-care centers and preschools that shaped the Constitution), is considered one of the greatest obstacles to implementing a policy that truly integrates care and education from the perspective of the rights of the child and of the families.

The Preparation and Practices of the Early Childhood Education Professional

Gender is also reflected in professional preparation, and in the practices and curriculum directed to ECE. The conception that women are, by nature, capable of caring for and educating young children served as an excuse for reinforcing ECE as the *locus* of voluntary or poorly remunerated female work, reflecting the low public investments and the absence of sound policies of initial and in-service training. With the 1996 Educational Law, the qualification of the ECE professional was also regulated, foreseeing the secondary level as *Normal* modality (the minimum preparation for this educational level), collaboration for the improvement of the preparation of day-care-center educators, until then mainly lay people without any appropriate preparation. (see the Teacher Preparation entry). But there continues to be a strong need for greater attention to the specific competencies that characterize the professional and to the shortage of men among the ECE professionals. In Brazil, the practices developed in these two institutions are aggravated by disagreement and imprecision regarding the responsibility of the family, in the private sphere, and the responsibility of the day-care centers and preschools, in the public sphere, for the care and education of the young child.

Inside the Early Childhood Education Settings

From the point of view of the gender relations in the interior of the ECE settings, there is criticism regarding the stereotyped socialization of boys and girls in early childhood that is commonly occurring within the institutionalized spaces of early childhood education and care. There is great difficulty, for example, in perceiving gender-related education as part of the work to be developed by day-care centers and preschools. Professionals, in general, do not know how to deal with situations that contradict traditional behaviors for girls and boys (for example, a boy liking to play with dolls or pots and pans). It is observed that children use as objects for gender representation what the adults—responsible for their education—provide and reflect. From this perspective, the emphasis is on the transmission of values of equality and respect amongst people of different sexes, as described in the National Curricular Referential (RCNEI) of ECE (1998), which highlights the construction of the identity of gender and of sexuality itself as more than the mere biological configuration of human beings. This vision understands the education of the children as extending beyond the reproduction of stereotyped patterns. The proposals for a nonsexist education also highlight the role of educators, both men and women, in deconstructing the meanings of gender in childhood relations, an aspect of the most recent policies aimed at the professional preparation of ECE.

Attention in Academic Circles

The intersection between relations of gender and ECE gained greater visibility in the Brazilian educational research with the systematization of efforts to establish, in the sphere of the state and of public policies, measures against the discrimination of women and in support of the education of young children as a right that articulated work, equality of gender, and early childhood education and care. In the last decade, this focus has lost ground to themes that are more focused on the relations established in the interior of the ECE settings: in the development of child sexuality, in the children's learning processes, in the production of the identities of boys and girls, in the games amongst young children, and in the relations between adults and children. These studies draw attention to the necessity for deepening the question of gender in the ECE period, for considering that the identities of gender are directly related to this phase of childhood development. The 0–6 age bracket is an important period for the construction of identities. ECE, from this perspective, must adopt a view of gender that recognizes the transforming opportunities in the crystallizing conception of masculine and feminine.

Studies on the character of gender of masculine behavior in day-care centers and preschools are rare. Some authors point out that entry into this field of work demands the mobilization of knowledge linked to the production and reproduction of life, and therefore relate in our society to the female condition, even when performed by men. Moreover, one must consider that the masculine presence, as a reference for the construction of the identity of gender in ECE, involves professionals, children, and families, as well as the redefinition of the function of

the ECE institutions in order to overcome the rigid models of separation between family and school.

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Cláudia Vianna and Sandra Unbehaum

China

Early Childhood Education in China

Introduction

Located in Eastern Asia, People's Republic of China is the most populous country in the world, with a population of 1.3 billion. There are fifty-six ethnic groups in the nation, with the Han making up about 92 percent of the population and other ethnic groups including the Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, and Korean. Both ethnic languages and the official language of mandarin are used in ethnic areas. In the last few decades, the nation has made great progress in economic development, especially since 1978 when the country began to adopt an open door policy and market-oriented economic development. As a result of this economic growth, living standards have improved dramatically in the past ten years for much of the population, However, in 2002, 5 percent of the population was still below the national poverty line and the developmental gap between the urban and rural areas was great. Currently, the number of children aged 0-6 is about 99.3 million, 8.14 percent of the total population. Among the child population, more than 50 percent are less than 3 years of age. More than 60% percentof these children live in rural areas.

After the Communist Party took over mainland China, gender equity was on the government's working agenda. Mothers were encouraged by the government to join the workforce, leading to the care of the children as a social issue. The Ministry of Education issued the first program regulation titled Kindergarten Provisional Operation Regulation (Initial) in 1952. It specified that "the purpose of the early childhood program is to ensure that children have a healthy physical and mental development upon entering the elementary school; meanwhile the program is to relieve the burden of child care from mothers, so mothers are able to have the time to participate in political, productive and educational activities." The double purposes of the early childhood program have not been changed in the past five decades, while the fostering of the development of children has been expanded

to include the development of physical, intellectual, social and emotional, and aesthetic.

A good beginning will provide an important foundation for children's lifetime development and this idea has been well accepted by the policymakers in the government since 1990s. To provide optimal conditions for children's learning and development, important policies have been made and implemented. In the two versions of the same government document titled Chinese Children Development Guideline (1990s and 2001–2010), the purpose of early childhood development is related to the nation's economic and social progress, and is tied to the improvement of the quality of human resources in the nation. Although many specific goals have been established for the improvement of children's survival conditions in rural areas in this document, the goal for providing equal education and universal access to all children is not mentioned. In recent years, the idea of equal education has been discussed primarily in the sector of compulsory education, and not yet in early childhood education.

Key Historic Figures

Xingzhi Dao (1891–1946) established the first early childhood program for farmers and factory workers in Nanjing and Shanghai in the 1920s. After Dao studied with John Dewey in the United States in 1910s, he returned to China to make great efforts for poor families and their children. He proposed that children's education should start before the age of 6 and that education should encourage children to employ both hands and minds; to learn by doing. He was also an advocate for the education of creativity.

Xuemen Zhang (1891–1973) was a well-known child educator in North China and Taiwan. He worked with children as an ordinary teacher for many years. In his behavioral curriculum, he proposed that curriculum is experience and life is education for children.

Heqin Chen (1892–1982) was a well-known child psychologist and child educator. He studied psychology and pedagogy at Columbia University in the United States with Kilpatrick early in the twentieth century. After returning to China, he worked in Nanjing Normal University as a professor of child psychology and education. Chen was the founder of the first experimental child education center *Gulou Kindergarten* in Nanjing, and also established the first public early childhood education teacher training school in the early 1940s in Jiangxi province. He was the first researcher to study children's psychological development in China. The curriculum research he conducted in Nanjing provided a solid foundation for the establishment of the first Kindergarten Curriculum Standard in China. He proposed the theory of "Life Education", which emphasized: (1) the goal of the education as to foster a good Chinese citizen; (2) use of the nature and the social life as the resource of the curriculum; (3) the principle for teaching young children as "to learn by doing, to teach by doing and to make progress by doing."

A Brief Sociology of Childhood in China

Chinese children's position in society has been changing in the last few decades. Historically, children did not have many rights in a Chinese family. They were

treated not as independent persons, but instead as the personal property of adults. Young children, particularly girls, could be killed at birth, abandoned, sold, or sent as a gift to relatives. Even as adults they usually did not have rights equal to the older adults in the family until they had a family of their own. This situation has been changing since early 1950s, following the Communist Party takeover of the country. However, in many rural areas today, girls may still not be treated equally with boys in terms of rights and position in the family.

The popular metaphor “children are flowers of the country, the future of the country” has been used to describe Chinese children. The idea that children should have special protection and care is not only written in the constitution but broadly accepted in Chinese society. During the past few decades, the conditions for the survival and development of Chinese children have been improving steadily. For example, the mortality for children under the age of 5 has decreased from 225 per 1,000 births in 1960 to 36 per 1,000 births in 2001; the infant mortality has decreased to 30 per 1,000 births. In 1991, the People’s Congress passed the Young Citizen Protection Law, which specifies the purpose, principles, and responsibilities for the protection of children. In the same year, China signed The Convention on the Rights of the Child. In order to achieve the child protection goals an important government document was issued in 1992, titled “Chinese Children Development Guideline in the 1990s.” The document made children a top priority. Ten specific goals for child survival, protection, development, and education were established. In 2001, the State Council Women and Children Commission declared that almost all the goals proposed in that guideline have been reached. A new Chinese Children Development Guideline for 2001–2010 has just been released, which proposes specific goals and implementation strategies in four areas: health, education, legal protection, and the environment.

However, changing people’s perspective on children’s rights in family life has been relatively slow, particularly in rural areas. Family planning policy may have made a positive change for children’s position in the family. Because of the pressure of population growth on the nation, the government initially encouraged and then (starting in 1979) enforced the policy of one child per family. As a result, over 90 percent of families in urban areas today have only one child. Needless to say, the only child in the family has been able to receive more care and have a better education. Parents invest more money and time in their only child’s health and education. In the family, the only child experiences the situation called “4-2-1 Syndrome,” four grandparents and two parents give their love and attention to the single child. One result has been overprotection and not enough discipline for the child in some families. It is also possible that the change in children’s position within the family may be reflected more in the distribution of attention and resources to the child, and not so much in respect for the child’s rights. For example, parents and grandparents usually have very high expectations for the child’s academic achievements. Many children in the urban areas are now expected to take extracurricular classes at an early age, such as English, computer, music, and visual arts. These children and their parents are often busy during the weekends, running from one training class to the other. In many cases, children’s own interests and choices are not considered and respected.

The Purposes of Early Childhood Education Policies

The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the National Women's Federation play important roles in formulating the national policies for the development and education of young children. The purposes of the policies are to (1) protect young children and mothers by improving their living conditions and the quality of service; (2) set up the national program and curriculum standard and to improve the quality of early childhood education; (3) coordinate the administration and management for early childhood education programs between different social sectors at the national, provincial, and local government levels; (4) improve teacher training and professional development system; (5) provide better support and child-care service to families and parents; and (6) provide support for the development of the early childhood education program in undeveloped areas.

Extent of Provision

Up to 3 years of age, the majority of Chinese children are usually cared for at home by grandparents, other relatives, or a hired nanny. In some cases, if family resources allow, the mother may quit her job for a few years to take care of the child. Before the mid-1990s, many workplaces provided child-care services for their workers. Many mothers returned to work after sixty days of maternal leave (the current policy allows for at least ninety days of paid maternal leave) and left their child in the on-site program. However, in recent years the number of employer-based services has been decreasing, because many state owned businesses have been sold to private individuals, resulting in closure of some of the child-care services. In urban areas, at the age of 1¹/₂, some children go to kindergartens that provide toddler programs, while others go to private home day care. A high percentage of children stay home until age 3. In some urban areas these children may go to early childhood education centers or stations for some parent-child educational activities. The percentage of children who enroll in regular education programs for children before three in urban areas is usually less than 20 percent. The early childhood education service for children aged 0-3 is not available in rural areas.

At the age of 3, the majority of the children in urban areas attend kindergartens for three years of early childhood education. Most of these programs provide full-day services and some also provide a boarding program. In urban areas the percentage of the children enrolled in early childhood programs is over 90 percent, while in rural areas it is only 39 percent. In 2002 there were 11.2 million kindergartens in China, serving 20.36 million children.

Program Types

The most popular type of kindergarten program is called *You Er Yuan*. This is usually a full-day program for children aged 3-6, or in some areas age 5 only and age 6 only. The school day lasts from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Children either have one meal and two snacks or three meals and two snacks in the center each day. Parents

are responsible for paying the cost of the food. In recent years, the service of boarding kindergarten (overnight accommodations) has been welcomed by some busy working parents in urban areas. Half-day programs are rare. The children in this kindergarten program are usually grouped by age, although mixed age grouping does exist. Teachers who work in kindergartens are required to have at least three years of professional training.

An independent early childhood education institute for children below the age of 3 is another type of program called *Tuo Er Suo*. This is an infant nursery that usually provides full-day service. The operation of these nurseries is the same as that of kindergartens and may be partially funded by the government, workplaces, or individuals. In recent years, this type of program has been integrated into kindergarten programs in some urban areas. Teacher qualification in these programs is usually not as good as that of kindergartens.

A third type of program that has emerged recently is called *Zao Jiao Zhong Xin*. This is an early childhood education center. These centers also provide services for children below the age of 3. Financially supported by local governments or other resources, these centers usually provide free or hourly rate education programs such as teacher-directed activities for infants and toddlers, or parent-child activities. Some of these centers are independently built and others are affiliated with regular kindergartens. In either case, the teachers in regular kindergartens play an important role in providing the service. These centers may have some branches called early childhood education stations, which are located in local communities. An informal child-care service for children before the age of 3 is the private home care, which is provided by individual families. This kind of service usually has a flexible schedule and the payment can be negotiated.

Supply and Access

A great gap still exists between urban and rural areas in terms of children's survival and development. Millions of young children continue to need help in obtaining nutritional foods and basic care. Because of the rapid urbanization in the recent years, many farmers have moved into urban areas to find jobs. Some of these workers bring their children with them, but most leave their children in the care of their grandparents or other relatives. In either case, the care and the education for these children have been a great problem. Migrant children may not be able to go to local child-care programs because their parents cannot afford such services. These children may be brought to their parents' worksite and often cause a safety problem. Children who are left behind with relatives may have more emotional and discipline problems in addition to the lack of parental protection. The number of the children affected by HIV/AIDS has also been increasing in some areas in the recent years. In some urban areas the government has been adopting special policies to help these children and their parents.

Financing

Before the mid-1990s, a high percentage of early childhood education programs in China were partially publicly funded, and some were partially supported by

workplaces. In either case, parents shared about 40 percent of the cost. However, in the last ten years, the number of public or work site funded kindergartens has been decreasing. In many areas, some of these kindergartens have been sold to private organizations or individuals to become private education programs. In some of these private kindergartens the cost to parents has increased, while the quality of the education has not risen. The number of private early childhood education programs has been increasing steadily in the past ten years and the monitoring of the quality for these programs has been a challenge for local governments.

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Xin Zhou

Family and Early Childhood Education in China

China is a country that devotes much attention to the functioning and responsibility of the family. Rearing children is a very important issue for Chinese families. The concepts of “carrying on the ancestral line” and “having offspring as a provider for old age” are characteristics intrinsically linked to Chinese culture and are still valued by most Chinese families today. Chinese families, including parents and grandparents, both in rural and urban areas, would spend all they have and do all they could for their children. Families try the best they can to provide support for their children’s care and education.

The Historical Context

Although the earliest history regarding the cooperation between the family and early childhood education programs may trace back to 1904 when the Qing Dynasty issued the first regulations related to early childhood education programs, the progress in parents’ involvement in children’s educational programs has been slow. Historically, it has been the teacher’s duty to communicate with parents about their child’s progress in early childhood programs, also known as kindergartens. Teachers held conferences or conducted home visits. However, the program usually treated parents as the receiver of the service or of parent education. Parents believed that once their child was sent to a program, the task of educating children was mainly the teacher’s responsibility.

This situation has been changing in the recent years, and there are several reasons for this change. First, the national government and organizations issued

a series of documents regarding the issue of parent involvement, including the following:

- 1) Kindergarten Operation Regulations, issued by the Ministry of Education in 1989. This document devoted a separate chapter to outlining the requirements for the cooperation between the family and the program.
- 2) China Child Development Outline in the 1990s, issued by the Chinese National Women's Federation, set a goal for family education. This goal stated that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, 90 percent of the parents who have children under the age of 14 should be able to obtain basic knowledge about child development and care.
- 3) The national curriculum standard titled "Kindergarten Education Guidelines" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001 proposed for the first time that respect, equality, and cooperation should be the principle for working with parents.
- 4) In the document of Innovation in the Primary Education in 2003, the national government established a law and policies for family education. In this innovation, the parent's important role in family education was pinpointed through the cooperation of the family and the school. The government promised to help to bring coordination between the school and the family into play.
- 5) Regulations issued by some provincial and local governments have also promoted the change. These regulations propose that parents have the right, as well as the duty, to become involved in their child's kindergarten education. Parents have the right to know the education program the kindergarten provides, including the policies, the management of the center, the curriculum goals and the implementation of the curriculum.

A second contributing factor has been the program evaluation of kindergartens that began in the early 1990s, which has emphasized cooperation between the family and the program as an important quality indicator and supported the idea that kindergartens should take a more active role in involving parents. Still another important reason for the change is that many parents with only one child have little experience in child rearing, and may feel the need to seek professional help. The kindergarten is a natural place for parents to communicate with trained professionals, or with each other, to obtain information on child care and/or education. Chinese parents' education has improved in the recent years, particularly in urban areas. Educated urban parents are taking a more active role in their children's education.

The Current Status of Family and Program Cooperation

Cooperation between the family and the kindergarten includes the following different strategies:

- 1) At the beginning of each semester, the kindergarten and parent may work together to discuss a plan for the semester. In general, this may start with the parents' proposals for the kinds of activities they wish the kindergarten could organize. The parents' proposals may generate discussion between the kindergarten and the

parents. Finally a detailed schedule is created for the semester, detailing the time, activities, and support the parents need to provide.

- 2) The regular information exchange between the teacher and the family includes the following:
 - Parents' conference, which is held once or twice a semester;
 - Family-kindergarten contact notebook, which is used once a week by either the teacher or the parent to leave messages for each other;
 - A family-kindergarten contact board, where parents may find a message from the teacher or leave a message, where children and their parents' photographs may show parent's involvement in the program, etc;
 - Some kindergartens in urban areas may also develop websites where they can develop a special section for parents or family education. The section could include more information on issues in which parents may have an interest;
 - Home visiting or telephone contacts are also used;
 - Short conversations take place when parents send or pick up their children in the kindergarten.
- 3) Parents are often involved in the educational process by collecting and contributing materials for children's learning; for instance, making tools or toys, demonstrating their professional skills to children, participating in field trips.
- 4) Some educational programs or trainings on special topics may be provided for parents.
- 5) Kindergartens may have special strategies for cooperation with parents who have children with special needs. For example, for children who have autism or are handicapped with cerebral palsy, it would be helpful if the kindergarten would keep in regular contact with their parents. Regular communication would facilitate discussion and educational strategies for the child. Additionally, for children who are from religious families or have special diets, the program would cooperate with their parents and have special arrangements for foods and activities that are adapted to their cultures and special customs.

There are various organizations involved in the issue of cooperation between the family and the program, including the following:

- 1) The Parent Committee, which is organized at the program level. This committee is responsible for the monitoring of the program as well as the organization of parents' involvement in activities.
- 2) The Community Education Coordinating Committee, which is organized at the community level in some urban areas, consisting of parents and community workers. This committee works to provide help in connecting families to programs. For example, the committee can help parents identify children who need special assistance and make arrangements with appropriate programs or supporting organizations.
- 3) The National Family Education Association and Early Childhood Education Research Association. Both of these national organizations have a branch on family and program cooperation (including the affiliating association at the provincial level). The organizations consist mainly of teachers, education researchers, administrators, women workers, and others. The work of these associations is to probe into the problems of family and kindergarten education.

Problems and Challenges

As regards the position of the family and the kindergarten in their cooperation, both parties firmly believe that the kindergarten should take a leadership role in the cooperation and that it has a responsibility to direct and help parents with their special training and skills. Kindergartens usually do take an active role in the cooperation between the parent and the program and this situation may easily lead to the neglect of parents' equal partnership and equal rights. In some areas, parents may be given no right to choose programs for their children, to know important relevant facts about the programs, or to negotiate with kindergartens on issues concerning their children. For instance, in some kindergartens, whether the parents like it or not, they are required to participate in certain extracurricular activities. Therefore, the challenge in facilitating cooperation between the family and kindergarten is not only in finding the strategies to encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's education, but also in developing ways to protect parents' rights in this potentially unequal relationship.

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Lan Gao

Early Childhood Program Quality

Quality in early childhood education may be defined at two levels, the system level and the program level. Current discussion of quality in early childhood education in the Chinese context mainly focuses on quality at the program level, although professionals in the field do believe that the quality at the system level has significant impact on the quality at the program level. In the last five decades, the central government has made important contributions to the quality in early childhood education programs by setting up a quality framework, making program regulations and curriculum guidelines, and improving the training and the status of staff. The provincial and local government is responsible for the monitoring of program quality. The evaluation of the program in most locations mainly focuses on kindergarten, the program for the children aged 3–6, and in some locations on the program for children aged 1^{1/2} – 6.

National Regulations for Program Quality in Early Childhood Education

The central government has played an important role in the regulating of the quality of early childhood education programs over the last five decades. The national regulations have evolved through several versions over time.

Starting in the 1950s, the Ministry of Education has issued several versions of program quality regulations. The earliest effort in establishing the regulation for the quality in early childhood education programs was issued by the Ministry of Education in 1952. Titled *Kindergarten Provisional Guidelines*, this document was produced with the help of former Soviet Union early childhood education experts. The regulation was composed of eight chapters and forty-three items: The purpose of the program and educational goals; years of provision; leadership and administrations; care and educational principles and curriculum content, enrollment, group size, adult-child ratio and staffing; financing, physical environment and facilities, etc.

The second version of this regulation came out in 1979, titled *Urban Kindergarten Provisional Regulation*. Comparing to the first version, this regulation gave less attention to overall organizational issues such as finance, leadership, and administration, since these issues had been well settled in the program by that time. However, the discussion of curriculum was expanded from one chapter to three chapters. Play appeared for the first time in the regulation and was treated as children's fundamental activity and an important means in the education of children. The encouragement of children's autonomy and creativity in play was emphasized.

The third version of this regulation, issued in 1989 and titled *Kindergarten Operation Regulations (Initial Version)*, clearly specified for the first time the purpose of the regulation as to raise the quality of center-based child care and education. Three years of teacher training or similar qualifications were required for working in early childhood education programs. The qualifications for other staff were also proposed. More specific regulations were made regarding finance, expenditure, and parent's payment management. A separate chapter was devoted to program-family cooperation. This version of Kindergarten Operation Regulations was finalized in 1996 with minor modifications: the respect and protection of children from abuse, discrimination, physical punishment, and other behavior that is harmful to children was emphasized.

National Curriculum Guideline

The first National Curriculum Guideline came out in 1981, with three main components: (1) Educational goals and children's developmental characteristics; (2) curriculum areas and objectives; (3) teaching strategies and important issues. The eight learning areas were: life skills and habits, physical exercises, moral education, language, science, mathematics, music, visual art. The objectives for these areas were specified for three age-groups in a program.

In the same year, the Ministry of Health also issued the National Care and Education Guideline for Children under Three. The guideline includes (1) The principles for the care and education of children under 3; (2) infant and toddler neuropsychological development milestones; (3) education in the daily routine; (4) infant and toddler language development; (5) infant and toddler motor development; (6) infant and toddler cognitive development; (7) infant and toddler interaction with adults and peers; and (8) teacher-directed activities for infants and toddlers. Education goals and teaching strategies were included within each learning area in the document.

The second National Curriculum Guideline was issued in 2001. (see the curriculum entry below for details). This guideline has been thought of as an important milestone for the reform of early childhood education, since the guideline reflects important changes in the understanding of the importance of education for young children, and in recognizing the place of children in the process of education in Chinese early childhood education history. One important change is that early childhood education has been treated as an important component of the basic education system in the nation, a foundation phase for formal schooling and the system of lifelong education. Another important change is that the child is treated as an independent person and an active participant in the process of education. Children's rights in play, education and development, children's needs, interests, and autonomy should be respected.

National Program Hygiene and Health Regulations

These regulations first came out in 1980, produced by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. In 1985 the regulation was revised and issued by the Ministry of Health. The regulation includes daily routines; food preparation; physical exercise; health checks for children and staff; hygiene and disinfection; disease prevention and safety.

National Regulation on Group Size and Staffing

The Ministry of Education issued a regulation for group size and staffing in full-day programs and boarding schools in 1987. Child programs in China are generally grouped by age, although mixed age classes do exist. Three age-groups were specified: the junior class (3-4 years old), middle class (4-5 years old) and the senior class (5-6 years old). The group size for each age should range from 20-25, 26-30, and 30-35 respectively. For each class, staffing is to include 2-2.5 teachers and 0.8-1 teacher assistants. The overall adult-child ratio is 1:6-1: 7 for a full-day program, 1:4-1: 5 for a boarding school.

In 1996, the National Regulations for the Qualification of Program Directors was issued. Directors are required to have at least three years of professional training, two to three years of child-center working experience and a title of first class teacher. The responsibilities of a director and the posting requirements are also specified.

Program Physical Design Regulation

The Program Architectural Design Regulation was issued by the Ministry of Environment Protection and the Ministry of Education in 1987. It proposed standards for the location, amount of inside and outside space, the room space required for different functions, such as classroom, bedroom, restroom, kitchen, etc.; the structure and quality of the building structure (availability of sunlight, lighting, sound insulation, water supply system, room temperature and air quality, electricity facilities). The space required for a classroom must be no less than $60 m^2$, and the calculation formula for the space of the playground in a center is $M^2 = 180 + 20(N - 1)$, where $N =$ the number of the classes in the program).

The Quality Control and Monitoring System

The quality of a program is monitored by provincial/city governments. The monitoring system includes two components: (1) inspector system; (2) program evaluation and ranking system. The inspector system has been set up by the Ministry of Education and organized by the provincial education committee. The professional and visiting inspectors in each city are supposed to inspect all programs once in a cycle of three years. The inspector group is usually composed of local teaching and research coordinators, center directors, experienced teachers, or other early childhood education professionals. Trainings are usually provided for the participating inspectors before the inspection visit.

The program evaluation and ranking system in most of the provinces was started in early 1990s. The evaluation is operated by the provincial and city education committee and under the leadership of the Office of Educational Monitoring and Guidance in the provincial and city education committee. Each province has developed a program quality standard and evaluation indicators based on the regulations issued by the central government and the local economic situation. Local standards, or lower quality standards may be set up by the local governments. Program quality is monitored more regularly in urban than in rural areas. In some rural areas the program may have never been evaluated at all. The most challenging quality issue in these areas is the lack of qualified teachers and physical environments that may not be able to meet the minimum requirement for children's safety and health.

The provincial quality standard is usually composed of the following indicators:

1. Physical environments and facilities, which include overall center space, classroom space, playground space, surrounding environment, classroom and playground facilities, teaching and learning materials.
2. Staff qualifications and professional development, which includes qualifications and position requirements for all staff members, adult-child ratio, teacher in-service training.
3. Program administration and management, which includes center size, group size, staff recruitment, program goals and department objectives, the establishing of program administration committee and staff participating in center policy decisions, program management regulation, rules and position responsibilities, program and department working plan and final report, regular evaluation, records keeping, finance management, the center's cooperation with the family and community.
4. Child care and education, which includes the establishing of children's records, regular health checking and disease prevention, hygiene and disinfection, safety, nutrition, daily routine, curriculum goals, content, organization, setting and learning materials, teacher-child interaction, child development outcomes, research projects and publications.

For the assessment of child development outcomes, children are observed in the classroom for their physical and emotional development, social interaction, initiative, curiosity and learning interests, and self-help skills and habits. The evaluation is not compulsory and the program must apply in advance for the evaluation. The

procedure of the evaluation starts from the program's self-study of the evaluation indicators. After the self-study and self-improvement, the program applies to local education commission for the evaluation site visit. The evaluation group is usually composed of six to eight professionals including city and district administrators, teaching and research coordinators, experienced center directors, and teachers. The site visit usually takes two to three days. The program quality evaluation results in a total score and a ranking system. The ranking system is usually organized as follows: Provincial/city demonstration program, provincial/city first class program, provincial/city second class program, etc. Based on the score of the evaluation, the program is awarded a rank for the quality of the center. Centers with a higher rank can set a higher fee to be paid by parents for children's enrollment. The programs that received a ranking need to be reevaluated in two to three years. At present, data are not available for the percentage of the programs in different ranks.

Current Issues and Challenges

The importance of the quality at the system level needs to be emphasized. Universal and equitable access to education for all children has been a common goal for all the nations in the world. China has been making such an effort in the sector of compulsory education, but not yet in early childhood education. In the past decades, the early childhood programs in urban areas received more government financial support than did the programs in rural areas. In rural areas, both the quantity and the quality of the program have lagged behind and there are no programs at all in some remote and undeveloped areas. Education equity in early childhood education is a great challenge for the nation.

Another problem is that research on program evaluation is rare. Longitudinal studies are needed in identifying important contributors to the quality of an early childhood program, so the research information can be used as a solid base for the development of government policies, regulations, and the establishment of quality indicators. Child assessment measures and program observation scales need to be developed; efforts have been made in adapting some measures (such as the measure similar to ECERS) into the Chinese context.

Although the overall adult-child ratio in many programs is as high as 1:6, the actual adult-child ratio in the classroom is quite low. This is due to the substantial number of the adults who do not actually work in the classroom, and the fact that the three adults assigned to a class sometimes cannot all be present in the classroom for the whole day. The actual adult-child ratio may be as low as 1:30 at certain times during the day. This is a quality problem we need to solve.

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Curriculum in Chinese Preschool Education

Introduction

Preschool education in China refers to the education for children from 3 to 6 (or 7) years of age, although in recent years it has been extended to include the education for children before age 3. Preschool education is considered an integral part of the basic education and the foundation for children's later school education, but it is not a part of compulsory education. The institute that provides education and care to young children for this age period in China is called *You Er Yuan* (kindergarten). (The English translation of both *You Zhi Yuan* [see below] and *You Er Yuan* is kindergarten. The term *You Zhi Yuan* was changed to *You Er Yuan* when the Communist Party took power in 1949.) The 2002 statistics indicate that there were 118,000 kindergartens nationwide with a total enrollment of 20,360,000 children.

The Social Historical Context and Early Education Curriculum Development

In 2003, China celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the first Chinese educational institute for young children. During the economic reform in the late Qing Dynasty, the first institute for young children was opened within an elementary school in Wu Chang in "Guang Xu Year of Twenty-nine" (1903 A.D.), called *Mong Yang Yuan*, meaning a public place where children were enlightened and cared for. In the same year, the provincial official Zhang Zhi-Dong, under whose jurisdiction the first *Mong Yang Yuan* was established, proposed the "Statute of Mong Yang Yuan and Family Education," which was made official by the Emperor Guang Xu in 1904. The first public establishment of an educational institute for young children, and the first relevant statute signified the beginning of a specialized education for the youngest age-group of its citizens in China. Before then, young children were cared for and sometimes educated at home. The development of Chinese early education and curriculum over the past century can be viewed in three periods.

Chinese curriculum: 1903–1918. The first period was from 1903 to 1918, during which the first early education institute, *Mong Yang Yuan*; was established and the first government statute was issued by the Qing Dynasty government. Although the initial *Mong Yang Yuan* adopted a Japanese model, including hiring teachers from Japan, the Statute of *Mong Yang Yuan* and Family Education specified *Mong Yang Yuan* to be housed in the social welfare institute for widows and the trained widows to serve as staff. After the Republic of China was established in 1911, the Education Ministry of the transitioning government issued another statute that included *Mong Yang Yuan* in the nation's education system, but it did not grant it independent education institute status. *Mong Yang Yuan* was affiliated within the women's normal school, or normal college instead of a social welfare institute. The curriculum included the following:

- Conversation on social conventions and physical objects
- Behavior and manners

- Reading
- Arithmetic
- Manual skills using Friedrich Froebel-inspired teaching materials
- Music and song
- Play

Chinese curriculum: 1919–1949. The second period was from 1919 to 1949. During these thirty years, China went through two civil wars (1927 to 1937 and 1946 to 1949), and the Second World War (1937–1945). Besides its war resisting Japan’s invasion, China endured constant political struggles and military conflicts between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Party. During this period, the majority of China was under the government lead by the Nationalists, along with regions gradually lost to Japan’s invasion, and some regions lost to the Communists.

A “School System Reform Plan” was issued as an education reform order in 1912. It abandoned the Japanese model and adopted the model from the United States for the nation’s school system, called the “Six (elementary years)-Three (Junior High years)-Three (High School years)” system. The reform order started to use the name *You Zhi Yuan* (kindergarten) for children under 6, which was defined as an independent education institute for the first time in the Chinese history. The Ministry of Education enacted the first “You Zhi Yuan Regulations” in 1939 (revised in 1943) that defined specific goals for kindergarten education. The Ministry of Education also issued and revised the “Kindergarten Curriculum Standard” between 1932 and 1936. The Standard stated four education goals for children under 6 were as follows:

1. Promote children’s physical and mental health.
2. Strive for the happiness children deserve.
3. Foster basic good habits for life including both physical and behavioral domains.
4. Support families in raising young children, and seek improvement in family education.

The curriculum standard described the curriculum content and the minimum objectives to be achieved in the following areas: music, story and rhyme, play, social knowledge, work, and rest.

During this second period various curriculum models were developed. For example, a kindergarten founded by Chen He-Qing, who studied John Dewey in the United States, developed a curriculum that based its content on the natural and social environment of young children. He implemented a “Wholeness Pedagogy” that included five kinds of activities: health, social, science, arts, and language. The contents in the five areas were organized in “units” based on the nature and society. Another curriculum model, the “Action Curriculum” was developed by Zhang Xue Men. Zhang believed that curriculum was experience, and the curriculum was to prepare the experience children liked and were capable of doing. The curriculum models during that time were influenced by the Western educators such as Froebel, Maria Montessori, and Dewey. Nevertheless, they were

also intentional experiments and explorations of developing education models appropriate for Chinese children.

During the same period, some regions of China were under the Communist Party and its army's control. Although the material conditions for these regions were scarce, there were boarding child-care centers organized for children whose parents fought in the wars. Many of these child-care agencies, called *Bao Yu Yuan* (A place of protection and education), became famous kindergartens after 1949 when they moved to the big cities.

Chinese curriculum 1950–1954. The third period started in 1950 right after the Chinese Communist Party became the governing power in the nation. Between 1951 and 1954, several important government regulations and curriculum outlines regarding *You Er Yuan* (kindergarten) were enacted. They included the “Kindergarten Provisional Regulation,” the “Kindergarten Provisional Teaching Outline,” and “the Kindergarten Education Guide (Initial Version).” These documents clearly defined the goals, content, and principles of the preschool education. They went on to describe the age characteristics and educational focus for each of the three age classes: the junior class (3–4 years old), middle class (4–5 years old), and the senior class (5–6 years old). The Teaching Outline specifically defined the teaching plans for different classes such as weekly lessons and the number of assignments in each of the six subject areas. It also laid out the daily schedules for half-day and all-day programs. The six subject areas were physical education, language, knowing the environment, arts and crafts, music, and arithmetic. The lengths of lessons for each age-group were also specified, from fifteen minutes per session for the junior class to twenty-five minutes for the senior class. The Teaching Outline emphasized that education for young children should pay attention to their age characteristics, and that teaching needed to be systematic. These documents were developed under the theories and direct guide of educators from the Soviet Union. The changes in the curriculum content and pedagogy model comparing to those before 1949 reflected these influences. The governmental statutes set up a national curriculum model with clearly defined educational objectives, content, and pedagogy. The Ministry of Education and the central government not only enacted the regulation and the curriculum outline, they enforced the implementation nationwide as well. Over the next thirty years, until the 1980s, Chinese preschool education became an established system with a unified program setup and curriculum model. The number of kindergartens increased from 1,300 centers with a total enrollment of 130,000 children in 1949, to 170,400 centers enrolling a total of 11,507,700 children in 1980. It should be mentioned that from 1966 to 1976, the regular preschool education and curriculum development were interrupted because of the political chaos caused by the “Cultural Revolution,” which affected every aspect of the Chinese society.

In sum, the development of the first eighty years of Chinese preschool education and its curricula were intertwined with economic reform and social changes. Despite political struggles and wars, the Chinese government and educators strived to establish and develop specialized education for its young citizens. The curriculum content and pedagogy integrated theoretical and practical influences from

the outside world, especially from American progressive education and education in the Soviet Union.

The Current Curriculum Status: Reform in Progress

The Chinese preschool education curriculum has been undergoing changes since the 1980s as a part of education reform related to the national economic reform. The milestones are two important government regulations: Kindergarten Operation Regulations by the National Education Commission, (third version in 1989 and revised in 1996), and Kindergarten Education Guideline (Provisional) by the Ministry of Education in 2001. The former defines the national program standards for kindergarten; the latter defines the national curriculum standards.

Current curriculum guidelines. The current curriculum guideline has four sections: Preamble, Education Content and Requirements, Organization and Implementation, and Education Evaluation. It states that kindergarten education is an important component of the basic education, and the foundation for a child's later school experiences and lifelong education. It requires kindergarten to serve the following functions: create the best conditions for children's development in cooperation with the families, communities, and elementary schools; provide young children with a rich environment and experience that meets their needs; follow the natural laws of development and learning of young children using play as the basic activity media; and provide both education and care. In the preamble it states for the first time that kindergarten should respect children's integrity and rights.

There are five curriculum domains: Health, Language, Society, Science, and Arts. Each domain contains the objectives, content and requirements, and key guiding points. For example, in the section of Language, the following five objectives are described:

- 1) Be willing to converse with people, in the proper manner.
- 2) Listen and be attentive in a conversation, and understand daily usage of the language
- 3) Be able to express oneself clearly
- 4) Be interested in listening to stories and reading picture books
- 5) Be able to speak and understand mandarin.

In the "content and requirements," the Guideline further elaborates the content needed to achieve the objectives. For example, one item states, "Provide a mandarin language environment. Help children become familiar, understanding and speaking mandarin. Children in the minority regions should be helped to learn their ethnic language as well." Under Language, the "key guiding points" describe concepts from the language development perspective to guide the curriculum planning. For example, "Young children's language develops in close relationships with their development of emotional, experiential, thinking and social interactive competences. Therefore, language development should be integrated into other domains of education in order to enrich children's experience, so as to create conditions that promote language development."

The Organization and Implementation section describes underlying principles of curriculum implementation. For example, in the item “The selection of education content,” it provides three “principles” in addition to what is stated in the Content section. The principles assert that the content should “Be appropriate to the children’s current level, yet challenging; meet the children’s current needs, yet promote long-term development; related to the children’s immediate life experience and interest, yet help them to expand their experience and knowing.” The section also describes the principles of organizing the daily schedule, working with families, and access to community resources.

The Education Evaluation section provides the underlying principles rather than concrete evaluation approaches and instruments. For example, item 7 states the key criteria for evaluation. They are: whether the education plan and the activity objectives are based on an understanding of the children currently enrolled; whether the content, method, strategy, and environmental setting motivate children to learn; whether the educational process provides the children with useful learning experiences and is appropriate to their developmental needs; whether the content and requirements pay attention to individual needs as well as group needs so every child feels successful and develops; whether the teacher’s guidance promotes children’s active and effective learning.

The current national education guideline. The current national education guideline reflects a drastic shift in the government’s point of view, especially in terms of the focus of education, the curriculum content, and implementation. The guideline no longer prescribes specific weekly plans and “assignments” for each of the curriculum subject areas. It pays more attention to the areas of development rather than knowledge and skills in subject areas. Children and their developmental needs are acknowledged and serve as the base for curriculum planning. However, the current guideline only provides overall education objectives and general principles. It expects the local governments to further develop their interpretations and guides, and the individual kindergartens to decide their own curriculum under the guiding principles.

Flexibility in curriculum. The general curriculum guidelines defined by the government leave a great deal of flexibility for kindergartens in different regions, cities, and communities to develop a curriculum that fits the children they serve. There has been a great variety in ways individual kindergartens develop and implement curriculum. Meanwhile, a growing number of curriculum resources have been published. Many of these resources may be titled as a specific curriculum, for example, “Constructive Curriculum,” and the activities in different curriculum books may overlap.

Another factor that contributed to the emergence of a great variety of curriculum models is the allowance of privately owned kindergartens as part of the economic reform under way since the late 1980s. Some kindergartens adopted curriculum models such as Montessori, models based on the Multiple Intelligences, etc. There is a greater autonomy for individual kindergartens, especially those privately owned to create their own curriculum model, as long as it complies with the governmental regulations and guidelines.

Current Issues and Challenges

The recent education reform and new governmental statutes brought opportunities for the development of the Chinese preschool curriculum. It brought challenges as well. Individual kindergartens and teachers who used to operate under a clearly and specifically prescribed curriculum can feel lost when they are expected to develop their own curriculum following abstract principles. The teachers and school administrators are not equipped in their knowledge and skill to undertake such a task without extensive professional development. One trend is to encourage individual kindergartens to develop a “kindergarten-based curriculum.” However, what this means is not clear either theoretically or in practical terms. The focus on children’s developmental needs rather than subject knowledge learning indicates a shift toward child-centeredness in the preschool curriculum. Yet parents and the teachers are concerned about how well the children are prepared when they go to elementary school since it is common that elementary schools expect the children to be prepared academically. Furthermore, many concepts and theories that originated in Western cultures have been introduced into the field of Chinese preschool education as resources for the ongoing reform. How such contemporary thinking and practices are examined in their own contexts, how they are authentically interpreted and adapted, but not copied into the Chinese culture, remains a challenge.

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Wei Li-Chen

Play in the Chinese Context

Play is an important process that differentiates preschool education from primary school education. In China, play is regarded as the activity in which children may make fun freely. While playing, children are usually joyful, excited, and roused. They are absorbed in the imagined situation, with rapt attention, initiative, and creativity brought into full play. It is so often that young children want to put off mealtime again and again in order to continue playing, and even finally end up in sleeping beside their toys. So it is evident that play has great charm to children. They are immersed in the freedom and happiness of play and just play for play, without other aims, without considering other things (for example, reality, reward, or a particular reason to play, etc.). Play is the most important

thing in children's lives, and makes a decisive contribution to children's physical and psychological development.

The Value of Play for Children's Development

Play meets children's needs for physical activity, cognitive activity, and social interaction. Children will continuously repeat all kinds of body movements such as running and jumping in play, thus the blood circulation and the development of bone and muscle can be promoted, and the needs of physical movement can be met. By playing with peers, children may accumulate the experience of social interaction; learn to solve problems by means of declining modestly, discussion, cooperation, or taking turns. They can also undergo different feelings, such as happiness, delight, sadness, or frustration, thus their emotional and social development can be promoted.

The surveys we have done indicate that the children with problems in personality and social development are usually those who are not interested in play or don't know how to play. Researchers and educators have increasingly paid attention to the value of play in children's healthy mental development. Various kinds of toys (blocks, ball, Chinese chess, dolls, etc.) and materials (water, sand, paper, paint, etc.) used in play can bring children various perceptual stimulations and intellectual challenges, thus arousing their interest in exploration and their desire for knowledge. In the course of repeated play and explorations, their needs for cognitive development are met.

Children learn through play. It is very difficult to ask young children just to sit and listen in the class, but interesting and funny play can deeply engage them. In relaxing and free play, children may explore actively and find out things and phenomena in which they themselves are interested. Free play not only meets children's desire to play but also increases their ability to learn while playing. Play is the principle learning approach for preschool children, and also the most enjoyable one.

The Place of Play in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum

Although theoretically play is regarded as a valuable and important activity for children's development and learning by Chinese professionals, this may not be evident in the actual practices found in Chinese kindergartens. For some teachers, less value is attached to play than to teacher-directed teaching and learning activities. Although the Kindergarten Education Guideline (Provisional) issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001 makes clear that "Play is the basic activity in kindergarten", in actual classroom practice, we may see phenomena such as "lessons are more valued than play" and "teaching games with a set of teaching objectives are preferred to the free play initiated by children themselves."

In the current kindergarten curriculum, play is more likely to appear in the following three forms:

1. As a leisure, free activity separated from teaching and learning activities. In this way play is treated as a means to meet the needs of children's social and emotional development, but the value of play to children's cognitive development is neglected. In

such play, teachers do not provide much support or provide appropriate materials for learning.

2. In overlap with the learning of specific knowledge. Under this condition the playful element of play is neglected and children's interest in learning cannot be maintained. As a result, play and learning (work) stand in opposition to one another. The idea of using play to provide an attractive situation for children's learning is not bad, but the challenge is how to create a playful situation for children's learning.
3. In integration with learning. This is the most ideal situation. That is, children do need free play, but teachers can also find opportunities in free play to facilitate children's learning by providing materials or scaffolding. If play is used in children's learning activities, then play should be really fun and engaging and children should participate in play actively.

The Types of Play

The two main types of play in Chinese early childhood programs are free play and play with rules.

Free play. This is the kind of play where children enjoy the freedom and happiness in choosing and deciding what to play, how to play, and with whom to play. Types of free play generally include role-play, construction play, and acting play. Role-play is the kind of play where children imagine and pretend, taking their living experience as the source. Construction play aims at creating something by using different kinds of constructing materials. While in acting play, children usually act the roles that are from fairy tales or story plots. This kind of play and other similar play activities such as "acting with flannel pieces," "puppet play," and "shadow play with story characters" are popularly used in language and literature activities in Chinese early childhood education programs. In the context of free play teachers in kindergartens usually leave children an acting corner called a "little stage" where all kinds of stage props are available for children to use and take roles freely. During the whole course of acting, teachers don't intervene or even pay attention to the children.

Play with rules. The second type of play involves a game with rules, which usually requires the participation of a group of children. Teachers usually take advantage of such games to bring children's interest in learning into play, or just use this kind of game as a means to teach knowledge. Therefore these are also called teaching games, which include quiz games, music games, and sports games. Teaching games are often created by teachers to reach their teaching objectives. Each game consists of its objectives, steps, and, of course, rules. The quiz game combines the purpose of developing children's cognitive abilities with the fun of a game, which enables children to exercise their skills and develop their intelligence. Puzzle games, maze games, and riddles are the typical examples of a quiz game. The sports game is used to develop children's basic movements. Many originated as Chinese traditional folk games; for example, "Hawk Catch Chickens," "Throw Handkerchief," "Bake Sesame Seed Cakes" (all are chasing games with certain rules). A music game is used mainly to enhance children's musical perceptive ability, accompanied by music or songs.

The Organization of Play in Early Childhood Education Programs

The play environment in early childhood education programs includes two settings: indoors and outdoors. The outdoor play environment mainly includes some large equipment for children to climb on and play, a sand box, and in some centers a water pool. A place with a natural lawn or covered with cement or plastic boards is for children to run, jump, walk, or ride a bike. A certain amount of outdoor space containing basic safety measures is required by government regulation.

The indoor play environment includes the following several areas:

1. those usually set up in the classroom, such as the house area, block area, and art area;
2. in addition to the classroom, many kindergartens in urban areas have special rooms for specific kinds of play or activities, such as a chess playroom, computer room, or music activity room. Children in each class usually take turns to go to these activity rooms during the week;
3. vacant place in the sleeping room (for napping) is sometimes used as additional play space. Some activities may be set up there. Chinese teachers are also encouraged to make toys or help children to make toys with a variety of materials such as packing boxes, bottles of soft drinks, etc.

Generally speaking, the typical playtimes occur in several segments during the day.

1. One hour of morning exercise, when children mostly play some traditional folk sports games outside, such as ball games, rope skipping, walking on stilts, etc.;
2. Thirty to fifty minutes of free play after the circle time, when children choose freely the play area or materials they prefer. Role-play such as house or hospital are popular themes for children's play;
3. Thirty to fifty minutes of free play in the afternoon, after the nap and the snack, when small manipulative toys or games are usually provided. Outdoor play may also be provided later in the afternoon.

The teacher's role in children's play is mainly to support and facilitate. The extent to which teachers actually do facilitate children's play depends on their training and working experience with young children. Generally speaking, many teachers regard the observation of children's play as a very difficult task. Without an understanding of children's play behavior it is difficult to facilitate children's play in an appropriate way. Therefore, training in observation and facilitating skills for children's play should be emphasized in teacher training programs.

Ideally, the teacher's role in children's play can be basically described in the following way. Teachers need to observe children's play behavior carefully and try to identify their problems and needs through their play. They may join children's play by taking either the role of a teacher or one of the roles identified by the children in their play. Teachers may facilitate children's play by setting up or

changing the play setting, through provision of materials, and by taking roles or providing direct modeling or suggestions.

Current Issues and Trends

Most of the studies of play that have been done in China are observational studies, most of which have provided descriptive reports on the characteristics of children's play activities. The unique value of play to children's development cannot be fully recognized as research methods are limited to descriptions.

The low position of play in the curriculum in some classrooms is embarrassing. The value of play to children's development has been accepted by most of the professionals in the field, yet in real practice that value has not been translated into teaching practice. The position of play in the curriculum has also been caught between parents' high expectations for children's academic learning and the teacher's desire to respect children's right to play. Frustrated by the contradiction between theory and the practice, researchers have found it perhaps not enough to limit study only to the field of play. Only by focusing on both play and the curriculum can we do the justice to the educational value of play in early childhood education programs.

Chinese researchers and educators have paid close attention to the following questions: how to make use of play effectively to facilitate children's development; how to arouse children's enthusiasm and initiative in the learning process; how to find the source of the curriculum from children's life and play; how to make the teaching and learning activity more joyful like play; and how to integrate play with children's learning and teaching activities. Many Chinese early childhood education professionals are convinced that early childhood education programs should not only facilitate children's development and learning, but also provide a happy life environment for young children's childhood.

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Xueqin Qiu

Creativity, Music, and Visual Art Curricula in China

In China, research on young children's creativity started about twenty years ago. Before the mid-1980s, Chinese early childhood educators paid less attention to children's creativity, and much of their attention was on the training of skills. In art activities, teaching was focused on how to help children learn to make a product. It was not important whether children were developing creativity. However, this situation has been changing in the past two decades. Many educators have begun

to pay attention to the development of children's creativity and its effects on the harmonious development of personality.

New Curriculum Goals in the Arts

The Kindergarten Education Guideline (Provisional) issued by the Chinese government in 2001 specified the goals of development of children's creativity in art education for young children. The guideline stated that creative artworks and art activities are significant ways for young children to express their emotions and show their cognitive abilities. Teachers should guide children to get in touch with the beautiful things in their lives and environments. With guidance, children can enrich their experiences and aesthetic perception. Teachers should support children's ways of expression that are rich in character and creation. They should provide chances for children to express themselves freely in their activities, and be encouraged to express their emotions, understandings, and imaginations bravely by using different art forms. Each child's ideas and creations should be respected. Their unique aesthetic feelings and ways to represent should be appreciated and accepted. Finally, the happiness children exhibit when they create should be shared. In practice, the Chinese art education curriculum generally includes two parts: music and visual art.

Music Curriculum in China

Music is an important part of the social and cultural life of human beings. It is also indispensable in the development, learning, and lives of young children. Music education has taken an important place in the 5000 years of education in China, especially in the history of early childhood education.

Beginnings of music education in china. In the Zhou dynasty (1006 B.C.-476 B.C.), the mastery of six arts was required for all ancient scholars. The six arts included: rituals, music, archery, charioteering, reading/writing, and arithmetic. Among these, rituals and music were the most important, because the ancient Chinese believed that music was the thing wise men liked, and music could guide people to be nice. It was also believed that people's hearts could be deeply touched and social customs transformed by music. Because of these beliefs, ancient empires set up a special institution for music education.

Changes in music education. In more contemporary times, the development of music education for young children was influenced by changes in people's values for music. From the 1920s to the 1970s, people understood music as a kind of skill that must be learned, and a method to convey ideas. Music education for young children was mainly concerned with how to help children receive musical education happily and effectively. This continues to be a part of China's goals in music education today.

The traditional music education in early childhood education programs generally included singing, moving to musical rhythms, moving to musical feelings, playing percussion instruments, and musical appreciation. The curriculum was

carried out through these formal activities. Music education was also provided in less formal formats, such as sing-and-movement play or games.

Children were attracted by the musical activities and got involved in them happily. For example, a traditional children's game, "Drop the handkerchief" begins with all the children sitting in a circle and singing. One child walks around the circle and drops a handkerchief anonymously behind a sitting child. The sitting child must notice the handkerchief, pick it up, and catch the circling child before he or she makes an entire lap and reaches the sitting child's place again. If sitting child does not reach the circling child, the sitting child will have to change roles and begin circling.

New trends. During the 1980s and 1990s, while the traditions described above were still practiced, the educators started to pay more attention to the effect of music education on children's musical and creative ability. This new trend was the result of the impact from many western philosophical, educational, and psychological theories introduced in 1980s. The early childhood music education now includes more creative activities, such as the following examples:

- Making new words for a familiar song
- Creating movements to match the given songs and tunes
- Creating different rhythms, movements, and instrumental-performing schemes for given songs and tunes
- Expressing feeling and understanding of the music freely by action images, visual art images, and language images
- Expressing the experience and emotions of daily life freely by action images, voice images, and music images.

To bring up children's aesthetic and creative awareness and ability, teachers are now expected to create a free, relaxing, and informal environment for learning. The musical materials teachers provide for children to play and explore should be easily understood by the children. Teachers are expected to respect every child for her/his ideas and efforts. Teachers are also to avoid, by all means, circumstances where children become unhappy or lose self-confidence.

Current conceptions of music education. In the last few years, Chinese educators have finally agreed that only on the basis of understanding children can teachers support and promote child development effectively. This has prompted Chinese educators to pay closer attention to the role of the teacher in musical education. For example, a series of researches has been done recently on the educational influence of music activities on the development of children's musical ability.

Besides developing children's musical ability and fostering children's sensitivity to musical beauty, music education is considered a significant means of facilitating the harmonious and healthy development of children. Music education is believed to foster a positive mental state in young children when they are emotionally involved positively in activities. By encouraging positive thinking, music also facilitates harmony that individuals can achieve between body and mind, the individual and others, and the individual and the environment. By feeling, experiencing, and expressing beauty in music education activities, children can reach

harmony in their physical and psychological development. The educational activities that emphasize mechanical drill and installation may cause unharmonious development and should be avoided.

Music curriculum in practice. In kindergartens, there are usually planned group musical activities two times a week. But in most cases, musical activities are integrated into curriculum themes and daily routines. In language activities, scientific explorations, free playtime, or waiting for meals, music or songs will be played according to the atmosphere. A piano or an organ is required in every classroom in early childhood education programs in most of the areas in the nation. Art education such as singing, dancing, and instrument playing is emphasized in teacher training programs, so teachers are able to play instruments in the classroom.

According to the Kindergarten Education Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, the goals of the early childhood music education are to develop children's aesthetic perceptual ability for music, to enrich their aesthetic emotion, and to nourish their aesthetic awareness and creative ability. Teachers can achieve these goals through beautiful and fun musical activities.

Visual Arts Curriculum

In visual art activities, people possess the following essential abilities:

- To perceive and imagine the visual figures
- To see and understand visual models
- To master excellent technical skills
- To be creative

For young children, visual art may reflect their sensitive experience, their insight, and their ability to represent and create the beauty.

Aims and objectives of visual art curriculum. As described in the excerpt below, the Kindergarten Education Guideline, issued by the Ministry of Education in 2002, advances the following aims for children's creative visual art curriculum.

to experience the beauty in the environment, life and arts; to be fond of arts activities and freely express own feelings and experience; to be able to participate in the art representational activities through individual child's own way

The objectives for creative visual art curriculum are as follows:

1. To foster children's sensitivity and experience for beauty by exercising the key elements of visual images. Practice in lines, shapes, colors, etc., gives children initial experiences with these elements. Through understanding the elements of visual images, children develop the ability to appreciate the beauty of nature, social life, and artworks.
2. To develop children's interest in visual art. Children should be stimulated to express their ideas and feelings, and to represent and create beauty by means of visual, creative art activities.
3. To develop coordination and flexibility of children's fine muscle, and help them to learn to use art tools and materials.

The contents of the children's creative visual art curriculum include drawing, handicraft, and visual art appreciation.

Understanding children's creative acts. To some degree, children are born to act in creative ways. The ways they act are unique and are different from those of adults. Children usually treat painting as an activity of play and a perceptual activity for beauty. They feel happy through free scrawl and creation. In their spontaneous play, children constantly have new experiences and feelings.

Children's aesthetic interests and spontaneous abilities should be valued, and their creative ability should be encouraged. However, the development of children's art ability is the result of learning, not the result of maturity. Through creating and experiencing art, this ability can and should be learned. Visual art education should treat children as active learners. Teachers may use many methods to bring children's full potential into play, to develop their creative ability, and to help them reach the goal of self-realization.

Theories in visual art education. Art education at the kindergarten level focuses on the children's lives. Children can see and touch the shapes, colors, and materials in the classroom. These are applied when children imagine them as themes and images in art activities. Teachers often suggest themes for activities that introduce key elements for sculpture. Children participate in these art activities in a free and playful way. They make sculptures by drawing, playing with mud, and decoratively designing. A variety of materials are provided for designing, such as cardboard, iron wire, pieces of bamboo, wood, recyclable junk, tins, etc. We believe that simultaneous use of both hands and brain arouses children's independent and creative instinct.

These principles and methods are different from those of traditional visual art education, which emphasized modeling and imitation. The basic principle of modern childhood visual art education is to encourage the spirit of free creativity. Teachers choose methods that are appropriate for children and engage them to express themselves through activities with paint or sculpture. In planning activities, teachers consider the children's interest, the children's developmental level, and the basic elements of image design. Teachers guide children to start from basic expression of images, which gradually leads to free creation. Children may use activities in design to imagine a kind of play or perceptual activity for beauty. Children are expected to complete unique works through their own thought and action.

Furthermore, the new visual art education emphasizes children's own observation of and experience with artistic works to help them understand the use of shape, space, color, and material. In children's art creation, beauty is the center and also the starting point. Visual art education aims to encourage children's perception of beauty. Children are encouraged to create new conceptions through design.

Learning through process and play. When children practice creating new designs, their experiences are enriched. When children draw or make crafts, they reflect while they are working, and their plans constantly change. The pleasure children

get from creating is not judged or altered by an idea of “well-done work” or successful product. The core philosophy of art education for young children is that learning occurs through the development of the child’s creative instinct, and the process of exploration and creation.

Children may need to learn some necessary skills in art education and these skills can be connected to their play in art activities. This will eventually lead to conscious and planned representation. If children can constantly explore new themes and methods, the ways they represent and express themselves will be enriched. Children will then be able to follow their inner creative desire, and to freely explore different kinds of creative ideas in art activities. As a result, children develop creative dispositions and personalities.

Current issues in art curriculum. Chinese scholars and educators have worked together to develop a comprehensive art curriculum in recent years. They have combined three types of art curriculum—literature, music, and visual art—into one curriculum theme. These three types of art are integrated to stimulate and support each other. The activity in a curriculum theme may start with any one of the arts.

How It Looks: An Integrated Curriculum

A class may start with a literature activity. The teacher lets 3- or 4-year-old children appreciate a poem titled *Star*, which is dubbed in with the music *Träumerei* by Schumann. From this activity, children’s rich experiences and emotions could deepen as both music and visual art are related to the activity. The teacher encourages the children to sing the song *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* in a soft and happy voice. This activity is then followed by a visual art activity. Children are asked to paint pictures of *A Starry Night*.

Similarly, the theme could start from a music activity. The rhythm and melody may spark off children’s passion in the creation of literature and visual art. In a visual art activity, the form and structure children perceived may be transferred to a musical creation or literary activities. Children may want to create music to represent a picture they have appreciated. A picture may make it easier for children to understand a piece of music, and the emotion experienced from the music and picture may be transferred to comprehend a fairy tale, relating back to literature.

Moving Forward in Practice

There are still many problems in art education remaining to be studied in terms of fostering creativity. In practice, teachers often oversimplify “creativity” into “being different from others.” As a result, children’s understandings of the basic elements and skills of art might be neglected. Educators need to improve the relationship between theory and practice so that teachers begin scaffolding children’s development of art skills, and their artistic and aesthetic feelings.

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Yunfei Ji and Meiru Tu

Social and Emotional “Curriculum” in China

The development of a Chinese social and emotional ‘curriculum’ in early childhood education has been closely related to the social and political change in the country over the past decades. Shortly following the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the main purpose of early child education in China was defined as to “foster children’s development in social dispositions such as patriotism, honesty, braveness, cooperativeness, friendship and proper social behaviors.” Unfortunately the whole early child education system deteriorated along with the social turbulence that occurred from the middle of the 1960s to the late 1970s. Social and emotional education for young children was distorted and defined narrowly as ideology and morality education. Young children were asked to recite the national leader’s quotations and political slogans, just as adults did at that time.

It was not until 1979, when the social reform and open society policy began, that early child education returned to normal. The subsequent national program regulations defined the education of young children’s social and emotional development as “political and moral education.” The contents of this curriculum were interpreted specifically into Five Loves—to love the country, to love the people, to love labor, to love science, and to love public properties. In classroom practice teachers tended to substitute moral education for the education of social cognition, behavioral habits, social behavioral skills, and social emotion. They attempted to reach their educational goals through such routine teaching methods as establishing model children and enforcing discipline.

Educational Objectives for Social and Emotional Curriculum

After the mid-1980s, with the introduction of educational theories and practices from Western countries and the publishing of a series of studies conducted by some Chinese scholars, the concept of social and emotional development became accepted by the professionals in the field. Thereafter, practitioners realized that there were shortcomings in the social and emotional education for young children. Young children’s social and emotional education was for the first time set forth as an independent subject along with health, science, language, and arts in Kindergarten Education Guideline (provisional), issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001.

Social and emotional development for young children was interpreted in detail in this national curriculum guideline. It emphasizes the development of children’s

self-esteem, self-confidence, the disposition of caring for others, and friendship. These goals are further elaborated into five operational objectives. Children are to (1) be encouraged to engage in play and other beneficial activities happily and confidently; (2) be willing to interact with others in a polite, decent, and friendly manner; (3) be able to tell right from wrong on the basis of social norms of behavior; (4) be responsible and try their best to do what they can do; and (5) love their parents, teachers, and peers, and love their hometowns and the country.

Besides the five objectives, the Kindergarten Education Guideline (Provisional) also proposes specific recommendations for social and emotional education for young in four curriculum areas. For example, in health education, the teachers are required to keep children adjusted to the program with steady emotion and to help children feel safe and happy. In science education, children are encouraged to play and work together with their peers and to communicate with each other naturally. In language education, teachers are required to foster in children the ability to listen to others carefully, and to teach the children to talk with others politely.

For early childhood education teachers to realize all the social and emotional objectives in education, the Guideline specifically requires that the teacher should do the following:

1. Encourage children to engage in play and various activities and to experience the enjoyment of playing with peers;
2. Encourage children to interact with teachers and peers, and foster children's positive and friendly attitudes toward others;
3. Teach children some basic social skills such as learning to share with others, to take turns, to negotiate with others, and to be nice to others;
4. Provide opportunities for each child to show their strength and experience the feeling of success, thus to reinforce their self-respect and self-confidence;
5. Give children opportunities to explore freely, to support their autonomy in choosing and planning their activities, and encourage them to work hard to carry out their own plans;
6. Help children to understand and obey basic social rules in daily life and activities;
7. Teach children to take good care of toys, books, and other materials in the classroom, and learn to clean up after the activities.

Current Classroom Practice for Social and Emotional Development

Since the enactment of the Kindergarten Education Guideline, children's social and emotional education in China has been developing quickly. In educational practice, early childhood teachers are currently required to follow five principles in designing and organizing educational activities: (1) to establish specific objectives for the activity; (2) to adapt activities to children's life and experience; (3) to engage children in some kinds of activities to learn social skills; (4) to involve all children in the activity; and (5) to help children learn in an integrated way. The objectives of social and emotional learning may be accomplished through teacher-directed learning activities, in play and games, in field trips, in daily routines, or by some other social practice. Teaching methods may include

explanation, conversation, discussion, demonstration, empathy training, and role-play. Social and emotional education for young children may take place in the program or through program-family cooperation. The effects of this education for social and emotional development are to be evaluated through observation, conversation, measurement, questionnaire, projection, or situation testing.

At present, education for social and emotional development has received much attention in China, with significant progress made in this field during the last decade. Early childhood teachers have generally accepted four conceptions regarding a social and emotional "curriculum." First, social and emotional development and education should be an integrative area that involves all other daily teaching and learning activities. Second, social and emotional education is different from the teaching of specific knowledge or a skill; it will take persistent efforts over a long period of time to see effects. Particularly for the learning of social attitudes and social emotion, children learn by their own experience as that is accumulated in their practical life and activities, it is not the result of teachers' direct teaching. Third, teachers and parents are the most important models in children's social learning. Imitation is an important way of social learning for children. Teachers' and parents' behavior affect children in direct and indirect ways. So adults should consciously do what they expect the children to do. Fourth, effective social and emotional education could not be achieved in early childhood education programs alone, it needs the cooperation of the family and even the whole society.

The four conceptions mentioned above are generally embodied in Chinese early childhood education. However, since social and emotional development in young children's education has just attracted attention for a short period of time and because the traditional Chinese educational philosophy still has a strong influence, there are still some challenges that need attention in the future. For example, the majority of Chinese parents and some early childhood teachers usually overemphasize academic preparation. Social and emotional development is often overlooked and distorted. Some teachers and parents may misunderstand and simplify social and emotional education by applying simple strategies such as talking or punishment. Other problems include the lack of sufficient playtime and play space for children in some programs, which may have negative impact on children's behavior and social and emotional development. There is much work to be done in these areas.

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Literacy in Early Childhood Education in China

Early literacy in the Chinese context focuses mainly on the development of basic reading and writing skills such as the understanding of the relationship between written and spoken language; the ability to recognize Chinese phonemic system *Pinyin* and some simple Chinese characters; the cultivation of an interest and a positive attitude for reading; the coordination between the hand and the eye and the development of fine motor skills, and so on. At present, it has been well accepted by the professionals that the early literacy education should start right after the child's birth. Since spoken language is the basis for the development of reading and writing skills, the development of spoken language becomes the first stage of early literacy education. Also, the cultivation of an interest and a positive attitude for reading is the central task for early literacy education. Through the rich experience of shared reading with adults children can have the opportunity to contact with books, learn the language, and grasp some basic ideas in reading and print.

The phenomenon of script is in nature a phenomenon of culture. The Chinese language, as an ideograph with its special characters, has countless ties and a harmonized connection with the Chinese culture. The implied meaning and the pattern of Chinese characters are imbued with the prototype of the Chinese people's human nature. The language conveys the messages of the history and the culture. With its character of pattern and meaning, Chinese has long been called the fossil of history and culture. And this characteristic of Chinese could definitely bring the atmosphere of culture, learning, and experience to children's early literacy beyond just cognitive and language training.

On the one hand, Chinese reading and writing research follows the cognitive psychology tradition, which focuses on information processing such as the storage of Chinese characters, the meaning extracted, the regulation effect of pictophonetic characters, the recognition of Chinese characters as influenced by the Chinese character pattern, the basic unit and the process of Chinese recognition, and so on. On the other hand, researchers have been making an effort to work from the cultural and psychological aspects of Chinese characters. They try to explore the culture and psychological archetypes in Chinese characters themselves and the cultural and psychological meaning in their patterns and structure.

The Historical Context in Early Literacy Education

As early as the 1920s, a Chinese early childhood education pioneer Heqin Chen proposed that young children should have the chance to learn written language through the activity of reading picture book stories, to recognize Chinese characters by drawing a picture, and to recognize Chinese characters that are used often in daily life. In 1960, based on the positive results of the study of children's early reading, the Ministry of Education issued a document to require early childhood education programs (kindergarten) to teach Chinese phonetics and characters. A variety of teaching methods and materials were recommended in the document, such as play, rhyme, story, music, movement, pictures, flannel pieces, puzzles, slides, etc. However, the implementation of the early reading

education in Chinese early childhood education programs was short-lived because of negative results that soon appeared when the children entered the elementary school. Many first graders who had been taught early reading in kindergartens were found to acquire incorrect pronunciations for the phonetics and to be applying incorrect instructions for the strokes in Chinese characters. Kindergarten teachers were blamed for the lack of the ability to speak standard Chinese and to provide a quality teaching in early literacy learning. Therefore, early literacy education completely disappeared from the classroom soon after early 1960s. Although some scholars did studies of early literacy in the 1980s and 1990s, the official reestablishment of literacy education in the kindergarten came in the year of 2001, forty years after the abandonment of the teaching of the reading of Chinese characters in the kindergarten classroom.

Goals and Curriculum in Early Literacy Education

The goals for early literacy education are to foster children's interests in children's literature; to help children develop their ability to listen to others; to allow them to express their ideas; and to provide the opportunity to engage in early reading and writing activities. Specifically, literacy education should do the following:

1. Foster children's interests and positive attitudes in books, reading, and writing. Children should be interested in listening to the stories read by adults and be interested in the recognition and reading of Chinese characters.
2. Help young children to acquire some initial reading and writing skills. Specifically, this includes the following:
 - (a) to help children understand the structure of a book, which means that children should know the book cover, the page, and the title on the book cover;
 - (b) to learn the basic skills of how to hold a book, look over a book, and read a book. For instance, children should know how to read a book from page to page, and how to read line by line from left to right;
 - (c) to recognize the people and the objects in a book. For example, they should be able to understand the basic ideas of a picture book and be able to tell the main content;
 - (d) to recognize and read some common Chinese characters in the book, have an initial sense of the structure of Chinese characters, and be able to write some simple Chinese words.
3. Help children to develop interests in recognizing some simple signs and written symbols presented in their daily life and environment;
4. Help children to develop good reading habits, such as taking good care of books and not to tear or fold book pages. Children should learn to pay attention while they are reading and keep their eyes at an appropriate distance from the book. Also, children should be helped to learn the skill of pointing to the words while they are reading the story.
5. Help children to develop the ability to appreciate literacy works. Adults should read literature aloud to children. While reading books, children should enjoy the richness and elegance of literary expression, and therefore deepen their experience and understanding in the literacy works.

In the classroom, children may participate in various reading and writing activities. Picture books are displayed on the shelf in most of the kindergarten classrooms in urban areas. Children may choose to read a book during playtime, before or after the lunch, or at the end of the day, when children are waiting for their parents to pick them up. Teachers may read a book to the whole class or to a group of children during the day. Particular books may be recommended for children for the specific themes they are doing. Children are sometimes encouraged to make their own books, etc. Very often, children are encouraged to act out the stories they have read.

Current Issues and Challenges

The development of early literacy education in China faces five main problems:

1. Early literacy education in some kindergartens may be oversimplified as simply the learning of Chinese characters. Thus reading becomes just a tool for the learning of characters, and the number of characters children can read is pursued as the major objective of early literacy education. This trend sometimes may be encouraged by parents eager to prepare their children for the elementary school.
2. Reading activity may be treated only as a tool for children to acquire information and knowledge. In this case the important purpose of fostering children's reading interest and reading ability in early literacy education can sometimes be neglected.
3. High quality picture books for young children are extremely rare, and there is an especially great need for those functional reading materials that parents and children of different ages could share through reading. In recent years, some good English children's books have been translated and published in China, but these still cannot meet the need.
4. Parents lack effective education in understanding how important it is to help their children to read early or how to help children to learn to read. Besides, people in urban areas in general would like to spend money on books, but the time spent actually reading with children has been decreasing in the recent years.
5. Community libraries are almost nonexistent in many communities and it is hard to find good books for young children in most of the libraries in China. Social organizations for reading are not fully developed, due in part to funding shortages, and reading societies and interest groups are extremely rare. The year 2004 was the fortieth anniversary of the "World Literacy Day," but even now China has not become a member state of this association.

As a result of these factors and unfavorable conditions for learning to read early, many Chinese children do not learn to read until they enter into the elementary school. Particularly for the children who live in rural areas or live in urban areas with their migrant parents reading begins much later than for the children in urban areas, since books are not even available in many of those families. Projects have been undertaken in urban areas to ask for book donations for those children who live in rural areas. To provide those children with early literacy education is an urgent mission as well as a great challenge for Chinese educators as well as for the whole of Chinese society.

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Lan Gao

Care and Education in China for Children under 3

Traditionally, Chinese families tended to have multiple children, many of whom lived with extended family members. During those years, children under the age of 3 often stayed home and were cared for by their mother, grandparents, older siblings, or a nanny. Beginning in the 1950s, women were encouraged to join the workforce for economic independence and in order to gain equal status to men. As a result, babies whose care was not provided by extended family members were usually cared for by child-care services provided by their mother's employer. This care was available for children before they could be enrolled in kindergarten at the age of 3. Babies might start going to such care as soon as the mother's fifty-six-day maternity leave was over. During the 1950s and 1960s, the development of such child care increased rapidly. Since many of these child-care centers were sponsored by workplaces, that is, factories and farm communes, the centers' hours were flexible to meet the mothers' working schedule. The care might be during the day, at night, on a boarding basis (day and night), or seasonal in rural areas, for example. It was common in some workplaces to provide nursing mothers a "nursing break" so they could go to the on-site child-care center to nurse or visit their babies. Sometimes the urban families might have paid individuals such as a neighbor or a baby-sitter to look after the baby. Regardless of whether or not the baby was looked after at home, or outside of home in an individual or group setting, the attention was focused on the baby's care rather than education.

Group child care has undergone many changes in the past twenty years. Since 1979, due to the great pressure from a continuing and rapidly increasing population, the Chinese government started enforcing the "only child" policy, which allows one child per family. As a result, government policies granted families benefits, especially mothers who promised to have only one child. One of the benefits, for example, was to allow the mother to stay home with the baby for one year, still being paid with a regular salary. This initiative greatly reduced the need of on-site child care. However, how this benefit is exercised now is less clear, because in recent years many formerly state-owned businesses have become privatized, and many private enterprises have been developed. In either of these situations, governmental policy may not have the same power it once had to enforce this benefit.

Types of Education and Care

There are several types of care and education arrangements for children under the age of 3. Many children before the age of 2 are cared for at home. The care providers can be the mother, grandparents, or a paid individual such as a live-in nanny or a daytime baby-sitter. The paid individuals are usually young women from poor rural areas. There are a couple of changes in group care. One is an extension of kindergarten, the preschool education setting that enrolls children above the age of 3. Many kindergartens start to enroll 2-year-old children in toddler class, while some others enroll children as young as 1½ years old. Another type of care for children before the age of 3, which has gained popularity in recent years, is called a “Private Baby-Sitting Station.” This care is usually a private business and enrollment may be as small as four babies or as large as eighty. The fee is negotiable and parents like this option for its low cost and convenience. When the child is 2 years old, the parents typically send her/him to kindergarten. However, some of these “Baby-Sitting Stations,” especially those in the outskirts of the city, may not be regulated at all.

Parents’ Awareness of Education for Children before Three

The adults who take care of children under the age of 3 focus most of their attention on the child’s physical needs. The child’s needs for emotional and cognitive development are sometimes met in nurturing spontaneous interactions or self-initiated explorations. Some parents, especially well-educated mothers, have started to pay attention to the educational needs of children at this young age. These parents actively seek out scientific resources that address how to rear and educate children under the age of 3, and they learn how to understand and respect the needs of their children. If the family’s financial resources allow, some mothers even leave their job to stay home with the baby. This indicates that parents’ values reflected in the education of young children are changing, specifically related to the first couple of years of children’s lives. Their parenting is becoming more thoughtful and intentional.

Furthermore, when children started to enter the Toddler class in kindergarten, some parents become actively involved in the kindergarten. For example, they attend activities organized for both parents and their children; they organize “Parents Salon,” they exchange information through the Internet, collect and provide resources for the school, write for the bulletin board, and so forth.

Resources for Parents

There are a variety of services for parents of children under the age of 3. For example, in some cities, there are agencies that organize group activities for both parents and the babies on the weekends. This type of service is sometimes referred to as an “Early Education Center” and it charges a fee for participation in its educational program. However, some parents are anxious about how to get

their children “ahead.” These parents may be tempted to use some commercially motivated “educational materials” claiming to know how to produce a child prodigy. These parents would start with training in reading, arithmetic, reciting Chinese classics, second language, and so forth for children under the age of 3. There are also programs that provide formal trainings for children under the age of 3.

Policy

In 1956, several ministries (Education, Health) of the central government decided that care services for children before the age of 3 belonged under the jurisdiction of the local health administrations and the central government. In contrast, kindergartens, the education settings for children between the ages of 3 and 6, remained under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. In 1980, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education jointly issued a health regulation for children 0-3 (and 3-6), which defined specific regulations in group settings regarding daily schedules, nutrition, physical exercise, health screening, sanitation and quarantine, disease prevention and safety, parent communication, and so on. In the same year, the Bureau of Women and Young Children under the Ministry of Health issued a program regulation specifically for children under the age of 3. It required that group settings for children under 3 needed to use age as the guideline: less than 10 months old (Nursing Group), 10-18 months (Little Group), 19-24 months (Middle Group). The group size for children in these three groups range between fifteen and eighteen children. Groups of 2-year-old children are called the “Older Group” and might have twenty to twenty-five children per group. For the younger groups the adult-child ratio is 1:5-6, and for the older group it is 1:6-8.

In 1981, the Bureau of Women and Young Children of the Ministry of Health issued another important statute, “Education Guideline for Children before Three (Provisional).” This statute, for the first time, elaborated the educational objectives for children under the age of 3. It stated that the educational goal is to build a healthy, intelligent, and moral foundation for the new generation. Therefore, the educational task is to promote young children’s development in physical, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic areas. The following education principles should be applied: use individualized education as a base, and integrate group activity into the daily routine; keep a balance between quiet and active activities, and indoor and outdoor activities; pay attention to both physical and behavioral development. The choice of educational content and method should be based on children’s psychological, neurological, and physical developments. Likewise, education should be integrated through daily routines so that children can develop healthy habits in eating, sleeping, dressing, washing, and toileting. Their language development, cognitive competence, and social interactive competence with children or adults are to be enhanced. The activities and assignments of language, physical education, arithmetic, music, and arts and crafts can be implemented for the Older Group, that is, the 2-year-olds. They may have four to six lessons per week, and each lesson may last from five to ten minutes.

Trends in Development

Some recent government documents indicate development trends in the care and education for children under the age of 3. For example, the National Women's Federation proposed the "Chinese Children Development Outline" in 2001. This document, issued by the state council, suggests developing the education for children under the age of 3 and completing and improving the regulatory system for such education during the period from 2001 to 2010. Some local governments made regional plans to achieve better service for these children. For example, Shanghai Municipal Government requires that 95 percent of the parents and caregivers receive scientific guidance on child rearing by 2007.

Teacher Training

In responding to the demand for specialized care personnel for children under the age of 3, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection developed and published a national vocational curriculum and certificate for *Yu Yin Yuan*, meaning "caregiver for infant/toddler" in 2003. It requires that people who provide care and education for children 0-3 must have such training and be certified. Even with this directive, there is still a lack of experienced and well-trained teachers in the all-day group settings for children under the age of 3. Although there are more diverse types of services due to more relaxed government policy on private business, the professional qualification of people in privately owned agencies for children under the age of 3 varies greatly. Sometimes the content of so-called "educational programming" tends to be commercialized rather than educational. There are more and more curriculum models for children under the age of 3, but there is a lack of research and assessment in terms of their appropriateness. Many parents, grandparents, and caregivers who are involved with children under the age of 3 still lack an understanding of scientific knowledge and appropriate practice.

At the government level, the Ministry of Health's distinctive role has diminished since the 1990s. In some regions, such as Shanghai, the leadership has been transferred to a joint effort by the Department of Education, the Women's Federation, the Birth Control Commission, and the Health Department. However, in many regions the regulatory and directive responsibilities and roles toward education and care for children under the age of 3, in group or at home, have not been clearly defined among the government agencies.

Access

The last point of concern is the rural areas. In all respects, the education and care for children under the age of 3 in rural areas has lagged behind, and not much attention, public or private, has been given to it. However, a recent report on a UNICEF project, "Early Childhood Care and Development Project" (ECCD) did identify some international and national joint efforts. One of the objectives of the five-year project was to have "70-80% of the parents of 0- to 3-year-olds in project areas receive parenting training." Six project provinces were in poor rural

areas in western China. Various project activities, such as parenting information dissemination and community parent-child educational activity stations, were reported.

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Bisheng Lou and Wei Li-Chen

Early Childhood Special Education in China

Introduction

As a populous nation, the People's Republic of China is home to a large number of persons with disabilities, as well as young children with special needs. In 1987 there were over 2.4 million children with disabilities from birth to six years of age in the following five categories in mainland China: physically disabled, visually impaired, hearing and/or speech impaired, mentally retarded, and mentally disordered.

In China, the origins of systematic early childhood special education can be traced back to the 1980s, when several hearing and speech training classes for hearing impaired infants, toddlers, and preschoolers were established in rehabilitation centers and hospitals. Since then, early childhood special education in China has developed relatively slowly in comparison to the development of special education in the compulsory education sector. In recent years, compulsory education has been a priority in China, consisting of six years of elementary education and three years of junior high school education for all children. Several policies and strategies have been applied to promote the educational service for children with special needs within this system. For example, the government provides financial support for educating children with special needs; curriculum standards have been established and special textbooks have been produced. In addition, special administrators in local governments have been assigned to facilitate the children's education. However, all these policies and strategies applied in compulsory education have not yet been applied to early childhood education.

At present, the information on the system of special education for young children in the nation is quite limited. In some urban areas, such as in Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjing, there are several kinds of placements for young children with disabilities. First, these children may be placed in specific classes in special schools. For example, Shanghai School for the Blind and Low Vision is the first school to provide programs for young children. Since then, schools in Qingdao, Guangzhou, Beijing, and Chengdu have established programs for visually impaired young children. Now, both hearing impaired and mentally retarded preschoolers

can enroll into specific programs in many special schools. Second, some rehabilitation centers run by the government civil administration organizations provide special services for infants and preschoolers with mental retardation, physical handicaps, visual impairment, hearing impairment, and autism. Third, in recent years, some early childhood education programs have opened their doors to children with disabilities. The young children with special needs can enroll in regular programs and study in regular classes. The trend of inclusion, or “learning in the regular classroom,” a term used in a Chinese context, is gradually becoming a supporting force in China’s system of early childhood special education. Fourth, in some communities a home-visiting service is provided for the young children with disabilities who stay at home. The home-visiting service delivery program in China is basically child-focused. That is, the home visitors focus primarily on enhancing the child’s development, while providing some guidance to the parents.

In sum, the development of early childhood special education in China is relatively slow when compared to the faster development of special education in the sector of compulsory education. However, in recent years, much more attention has been paid to the needs of infants and preschoolers with disabilities.

Policy

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the government passed three important statutes regarding education for children with special needs. These statutes include: the Compulsory Education Act (1986), the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities (1990), and the Five-Year Plan for the Disabled (1991). Since then, special education for children has developed rapidly in China. Although these laws focus primarily on school-aged children, in recent years, there has been an increase in attention to the needs of young children with special needs.

The Social Context of Special Education

Special education in China refers to the education provided for children with special needs in special schools, such as schools for the visually disabled, hearing disabled and mentally retarded children; in special classes in ordinary primary and secondary schools; or in regular school classrooms. Special education specifically aims at the physically and mentally disabled children who require special services. In 1951, the government issued a document called The Act on the Reform of School Systems, which stipulated that special schools should be established for school-aged children who were deaf or blind. Since then, special education has formally become a necessary component in China’s national education system. But for a long time, neither special schools nor general early childhood education programs accepted children with disabilities under the age of 6.

Since the 1990s, the development of special education in China has entered a new phase. On the one hand, China established concrete laws and policies that focused on persons with special needs. In order to promote the development of special education, the People’s Congress passed the Law of Compulsory

Education, the Social Security Law for Disabled Persons. These laws aim to protect disabled persons, ensuring their political and educational rights. As a result, special education is an important part of China's formal education system. At the same time, social attitudes toward children and adults with disabilities have changed significantly. For example, the number of special schools and institutions for children with disabilities has been increasing rapidly. Besides the schools for children with visual or hearing impairment, schools for mentally retarded children have been built all over the nation. In some provinces, rehabilitation centers, welfare homes, and day-care centers for disabled persons have been established for persons with different kinds of disabilities. Children receive different kinds of support in these schools and institutions, aimed at improving their cognitive and social skills and helping them gain a sense of self-reliance and confidence to socialize. Furthermore, these facilities help provide a more comprehensive system of special education. Presently, the central government is planning to construct a network for the education of children with disabilities, with special schools as the backbone of this network. The supporting force of this program includes special classes in general schools, as well as regular classes with children with disabilities. All these programs should follow the general guidelines, which are to enable each student to develop morally, intellectually, and physically. At the same time, the education provided should adapt to the children's unique characteristics and their special needs.

The System of Early Childhood Special Education

Current programs for young children with disabilities in China include (1) special classes in regular early childhood education programs, called kindergarten; (2) special classes for preschoolers in special schools such as schools for the visually disabled, hearing disabled, and mentally retarded children; (3) programs for children with relatively minor handicaps in ordinary kindergarten classes.

Curriculum. In China, teachers play an important role in planning the activities for young children with disabilities. Many special educators believe that curriculum has to be developed by each special class teacher, who then adapts to the conditions of the community, the young children's needs, abilities and aptitudes, etc. Yet there are no national curriculum standards for the education of children with special needs. Usually, the curriculum is planned with a focus on the training of children's independent living skills and basic academic skills, while the moral, cultural, intellectual, physical, and compensatory mental education are also included. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) should be developed for each young child with special needs as a supplement to the common curriculum. In order to develop the potentials of each young child with special needs, the success of IEP depends on the cooperation among the professionals and parents.

Although every teacher who teaches in an early childhood special education program has been required to develop IEP programs for individual children, it is not an easy task for many teachers and there is still a great need to raise the quality of instruction for young children with various conditions.

Current Issues and Challenges

There are a lot of issues and controversies in early childhood special education in China. The first problem is the assessment and referral system for the children with special needs. The enrollment of a child with special needs into the special education program is determined on the basis of an assessment and placement procedure. However, a standard assessment and referral procedure for the parents of young children has not been established, and the process for the identification of a child who needs special help is usually quite slow. As a result, a high percentage of young children with disabilities may not be able to get into the screening process on time. In urban areas, kindergarten teachers are usually sensitive, and sometimes may be oversensitive, to children who may have learning and communicating problems and are able to refer them to hospitals for testing. The second problem is the lack of appropriate assessment tools for the identification of young children with special needs. Tests developed in the western countries, such as the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Stanford-Binet tests, have been used to detect and identify disabilities. Although the assessment of cognitive and social functions by using these tools is a good starting point, the assessment of a child with mental disabilities requires a more comprehensive assessment for a wide range of skills. Third, teacher training for special education is still a great and urgent problem. Many educators who are working with young children with special needs have not received any pre- or in-service special training.

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Wen Qian

Early Childhood Teacher Education in China

Yinghua girl's school, founded by an American Methodist church in Suzhou, Jiangsu province in 1889, was the first educational institution that offered vocational training for Chinese preschool teachers. In the following years a number of women's schools and colleges were established by missionaries from the United States and other foreign countries, and quite a number of independent teacher training colleges began to set up training programs for preschool teachers. The training offered by these missionary schools and colleges had a strong religious component in the curriculum, and artistic education was also emphasized.

The first teacher training institute run by the Chinese was a women's school, which was set up by Hubei Preschool in 1903. This institute recruited and trained young women aged 15–35 to be preschool teachers. However, it was soon closed because of the official ban on women's schools at the time. With the emergence of private women's schools, some nursemaid training programs were also set up.

For example, Yanshi Women's School in Tianjin with its nursemaid-training class was quite well known at that time. These private institutes usually hired Japanese teachers or sent teachers to Japan to be trained in child care. The curriculum in these programs typically includes courses in child care, music, and gymnastics, games, handicrafts, English, child psychology, pedagogy, arithmetic, physiology, and chemistry.

From the 1910s to 1930s, teacher training programs were set up in many private normal schools (schools to provide teacher training at the secondary education level) or universities in the cities of Beijing, Tianjing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Xiamen, and Nanjing. The government issued the Women's Normal School Regulation in 1907, which officially lifted the ban on women's schools. For the first time in Chinese history, education for preschool teachers was treated as a formal part of the teacher education system.

The first public normal school for preschool teachers in China was established in Jiangxi province in 1940 by Heqin Chen (1892-1982). Mr. Chen had studied with John Dewey at Columbia University in the United States and was the founder of early childhood education in China. In 1943, this school was upgraded to become a national normal school, which was supported by the central government. In 1946, Heqin Chen established the second normal school in Shanghai. These two modern normal schools have been regarded as milestones in the history of teacher education for young children in China.

Over the past century, and especially since the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949, an educational system for preschool teachers has been established in China to meet different needs in basic education. This educational system consists of independent teacher training institutions as the core, supplemented by other educational organizations. Currently, preschool teacher education in China is composed of two parts: preservice education and in-service training.

Preservice Teacher Education

Preservice preparation takes place at both the secondary school and higher education levels.

Programs in secondary education. These programs are offered in three different settings: independent normal schools, regular normal schools, and vocational senior high schools.

Independent normal schools. An independent normal school for preschool teachers provides a four-year or three-year full-time education for female students (male students occasionally) graduated from junior high schools. By the middle of the 1990s, such schools had become major educational institutions for the training of preschool teachers. The curriculum planning in these schools has been guided by the central government. The Ministry of Education has issued a series of versions of the Guidelines for the Curriculum Plan for Normal Schools for Preschool Teachers (1956, 1980, 1985, and 1995), which provides guidance in the curriculum planning, including goals and objectives, curriculum content and components, and the implementation procedures. The typical curriculum for these programs includes required courses, elective courses, practicum and

extracurricular activities. Courses offered in those programs are basically composed of two parts. One part includes the basic courses in high school education; the other part includes the courses in teacher training, such as child care, child psychology, introduction to early childhood education, language, mathematics, science, music, and visual art education for young children. Artistic skill training in these schools has been also emphasized, such as singing, dancing, and piano playing.

In the recent years, the number of such independent normal schools for preschool teachers has been decreasing gradually and some of these schools have merged with the preschool education programs in the university, due to the raising of qualification standards for preschool teachers in urban areas. In some urban areas this standard has risen to at least an associate bachelor's degree. However, the teacher qualification in rural areas is much lower.

Programs in regular normal schools. Because of the shortage of independent normal schools for preschool teachers, starting in 1951 the Chinese government stipulated that all regular normal schools (schools for the training of primary school teachers) should set up training programs for preschool teachers. Such programs recruit graduates from junior high schools. The curriculum in these programs is similar to normal schools for preschool teachers.

Programs in vocational senior high schools. In the 1980s, the number of programs for preschool teachers in vocational senior high schools increased substantially to meet the increasing demand for preschool teachers. Students graduated from junior high schools were admitted for two to four years of training. Data indicate that in the year 2000 about 152,900 preschool teachers out of the total 900,000 had been trained by these programs nationwide. The majority of the preschool teachers currently working in rural China were trained in such programs.

Higher Education for Preschool Teachers. There are three levels of preschool-related preparation at the college and university level: associate bachelor's programs, bachelor's programs, and postgraduate programs.

Associate bachelor's program. Two types of institutes provide such programs: independent colleges for preschool teachers and departments in normal universities (universities provide the bachelor's or a higher level of teacher training). These programs admit students who graduated from senior high schools or normal schools for preschool teachers, or those with equivalent educational background. These programs last for two years.

Bachelor's programs. The Departments of Early Childhood Education at Nanjing and Beijing Normal Universities started this program in the early 1950s. The program ceased operations between 1966 and 1977 during the Cultural Revolution, and restarted in 1978. East China Normal University and a number of other normal universities established early childhood education programs in early 1980s. The students who want to enroll in these programs have to take the national college entry examination and get a score that meets the requirement set by the university. These programs are four years in duration.

Programs for early childhood education increased rapidly in 1990s. Typical training in this program is composed of courses in the field of child development; theories in early childhood education; children's development and education in

the area of language, mathematics, science, visual art, and music. Student teaching and thesis writing are required. Many new courses have been offered through bachelor programs in recent years, such as education research methodology, preschool curriculum development, child nutrition, information technology and early childhood education, and remediation for children's abnormal behavior. Graduates from these programs used to work in normal schools for preschool teachers as instructors prior to the mid-1990s. However, in recent years many graduates have started to work as teachers of young children in urban areas, because of the decreasing number of normal schools for preschool teachers and the higher standards for teacher qualifications in the cities.

Postgraduate programs. In the mid-1980s Nanjing Normal University and Beijing Normal University started to offer master's programs in early childhood education. The first doctoral program in early childhood education started in Nanjing Normal University in the mid-1990s and now a doctoral program is offered in several universities. People with postgraduate degrees in early childhood education usually work as professionals at universities or research institutes, although some of them have worked in early childhood education programs as directors or teachers and research coordinators.

Continuing Education

Continuing education for preschool teachers operates at two levels: secondary education and higher education.

Secondary continuing education. Secondary continuing education, both degreed and nondegreed, has been offered to preschool teachers who did not receive formal training in early childhood education. Programs at this level include the following:

Certificate programs. In these programs teachers are able to get training to meet a minimum requirement for the teacher position. The training is usually composed of nine core courses such as child psychology, early childhood education pedagogy, child hygiene, language, mathematics, science, music, visual art, and physical education for young children.

Part-time programs. These offer in-service teacher training equivalent to that of secondary education at normal school. Such programs may offer either full-time or part-time training, night school, correspondence courses, or self-study examinations organized by the provincial government.

Specific theme-based training classes. Usually offered by universities, normal school for preschool teachers, provincial or municipal teacher training centers for preschool teachers, or some private educational organizations or individuals.

Center-based workshops. These workshops provide preschool teachers an opportunity to learn from colleagues. Teachers may also learn to do reflective teaching by participating in action research projects in the center that is able to provide such an opportunity.

Continuing Higher Education. Continuing education for preschool teachers at the higher education level includes the following degree and nondegree programs:

Degree education. Continuing degree education is similar to regular degree education, including programs at the associate bachelor's, bachelor's, and master's levels. The associate bachelor's program may offer one of the following options: a two-year full-time program, a three-year correspondence program, an evening school program, or an examination for self-study learners. The bachelor's program may take four years of study for high school graduates or an additional two years of study after preparation at the associate bachelor's level. Preschool teachers may also pursue master's or doctoral study, mostly done on a part-time basis.

Nondegree education. Nondegree education for preschool teachers is provided through training classes, teaching-related researches, academic workshops, conferences, or nondegree graduate courses. Recently a new type of nondegree education is to take certain graduate courses to earn a certificate. In addition, preschool teachers' professional development in China is also benefited from educational exchanges between China and international organizations as well as other countries. A variety of international educational exchanges, such as delegations and study tours have contributed greatly to the development of preschool teacher education in China in recent two decades.

In sum, teacher education for preschool teachers has made great progress in the past two decades in mainland China, particularly in urban areas. However, there is a gap between the urban and rural areas in terms of teacher qualification and teacher education. Policies and financial resources should be used to provide support for the development of teacher training in rural areas.

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Jingbo Liu

The Czech Republic

Early Childhood Education in the Czech Republic

Introduction

The Czech Republic came into existence in January 1993, when the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic split into two states. It is still in the throes of the transformation from a socialist society with centralized administration and a planned economy to one operating according to the principles of a market economy and political pluralism—the process that was launched by the political revolution of November 1989. The type of government is a parliamentary democracy with a president elected by the Parliament, which exercises legislative power. Executive power is held by the national government.

Public administration has experienced an extensive reform and is provided by state administration and self-government. The territorial administration has two levels: municipalities that are basic self-governing units, and fourteen higher territorial self-governing units called regions. Municipalities and regions have a double sphere of authority—independent powers, including education, and transferred powers, with which they perform state administration.

In 2003, the Czech Republic had a population of 10.24 million and a population density of 131 inhabitants per square kilometer. The fertility rate is unfavourable, resulting in a low birthrate. There are 540,000 children under 6 years of age. Infant mortality was 3.9 per thousand children in 2003. The state is neutral on religious matters, and freedom of religion is guaranteed. The number of people practicing religion is low (32% of inhabitants declare themselves as believers). Over 83 percent of believers belong to the Roman Catholic Church (over 26% of the population).

The language of instruction is Czech. Pupils from ethnic minorities are guaranteed the right to education in their mother tongue to an extent appropriate to the development of their ethnic community. Schools for national minorities can operate up to the upper-secondary school level. The total employment rate among women is 73.7 percent; the rate of employment among women with one child is

72.3 percent and with two children 59.4 percent. The rate of employment among women with children under six years of age (255 thousand) was 36.4 percent. Only 4.0 percent of women work part-time.

The budget reserved for social expenditures is 20.1 percent of GDP; the child poverty rate is 5.9 percent after redistribution (OECD average is 11.9%). Funding of preprimary educational services is 0.5 percent GDP, corresponding to 10 percent of the education budget.

Early Childhood Education

Nursery schools (*mateřská škola*) have a long and special national tradition, influenced among others by the ideas of Jan Amos Komenský (John Amos **Come-nius**) in the seventeenth century. Preprimary education was incorporated into the education system in 1948. The quality of preprimary education increased considerably in the postwar period. At the same time, however, it became an instrument for increasing the number of women in the country's labor force, while enforcing the principles of collective education and weakening the influence of the family over the children's education.

After the 1989 revolution a lively debate developed over the role of nursery schools, their new role in the education system and their educational function. The personality-oriented model of preprimary education was encouraged by new legislation (Act no. 390/1991). Nursery schools now must contribute to an increase in the level of sociocultural care for children and lay the foundations for their future education.

Early childhood education in the Czech Republic is regarded as part of the system of education and its objectives are defined by the Educational Act (*Zákon*, 2004), enacted in 2005 by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. Early childhood education in the Czech Republic is almost entirely a public service. Some private and denominational nursery schools are now in operation, but only on a small scale.

Attendance is not compulsory, but 87 percent of children attend nursery schools (2002/2003), with attendance increasing in the last year of preschool education (98%). The basic age-group of children attending nursery schools is 3- to 6-year-olds. In exceptional cases, where parents have no other alternative, it is possible to accept younger children, for whom municipalities otherwise set up day crèches (for infants and toddlers). Currently there are also older children (about 20%) whose attendance at basic school has been deferred, usually at the parent's request. Fewer than 1 percent of applications for placement in nurseries are not met. Children in their last year before the start of compulsory school are enrolled in nursery schools preferentially. If a child cannot be enrolled in a nursery school for capacity reasons in his/her last year before the start of compulsory school, the municipality in which the child has a permanent address makes sure that the child is enrolled in another nursery school. The child may be enrolled for early childhood education at any time throughout the school year.

Classes are coeducational. Schools with fewer than 100 pupils prevail (92% in the school year 2002/2003). Some schools are attached to a basic school (*základní škola*). Their number increased in 2002.

Financing

Funding for early childhood education is drawn from multiple sources—the regional school authority (teachers' salaries, books, and equipment), municipalities (running costs and capital investments), and parental fees (capped at 50% of costs for the first two years and free for the final year). Funds to improve material conditions or purchase equipment and toys are often generated through sponsoring contracts with private enterprises. Parental fees are reduced or waived for families in need. There are special supports for low-income/ethnic areas and families. Parents also contribute to meals that are subsidized; however, some municipalities do not impose this charge.

Organization and Coordination of Services

Child care for children under 3. Almost all children aged 0–3 are cared for by their families or through informal care arrangements. Center-based crèches are scarce. Child-care services are a municipal responsibility. Government funding is directed almost exclusively to parental leave policies. Maternal and parental leave is as follows: twenty-eight weeks maternity leave paid at 69 percent of earnings, followed by a flat-rate, parental leave benefit paid until children reach their fourth birthday.

Crèches are administered by the Ministry of Health and therapeutic child-care centers are part of the Ministry of Social Affairs. In practice, there is no longer an organized day-care system for children from 0 to 3 years of age, compared to a coverage rate of 20 percent in 1989. The introduction of an extended period of maternal leave after transition reduced demand for public child care outside the home. Only sixty crèches (in 2004) have survived from the previous regime. Former crèche buildings have been sold or allocated to other purposes. However, children over 2 years of age can attend nursery schools (at the present time, about 20% do). Public child care for children under 3 is governed by no obligatory educational program. Children in crèches are cared for by children's nurses with high school education acquired at secondary medical schools.

Nursery schools. Nursery schools are administered mainly by municipalities, which also fund them (except for salaries and teaching aids). There are an insignificant number of private and denominational nursery schools. Usually open for ten to eleven hours a day, nursery schools are established as full-day (the majority) or half-day-care centers. They can also be established as boarding facilities or facilities with an irregular attendance schedule.

An amendment to the law on the state administration and self-government required all schools to become legal entities from January 1, 2003. This resulted in some cases in the merging of several nursery schools, and more often in the combining of nursery schools and basic schools under one directorate.

Classes should have a minimum of fifteen children and a maximum of twenty-five, but this maximum is currently being exceeded. Decisions on class sizes are taken by school heads after consultation with the school's organizing body. The average number of pupils per class is 22.3. One or two teachers care for

each group of children depending on the number of children in the group and length of the day. The recommended pupil/teacher ratio is 12:1. Groups may be organized according to age, by the degree of adaptability or achievement, or with mixed ages and progress levels. Inclusion of children with disabilities is increasing, although many special nursery schools and schools still exist, even for children with relatively light handicaps. Disabled children make up 4.2 percent of the total number of children attending nursery schools; almost a half of these attend special nursery schools. A parent responsible for a chronically ill or long-term disabled or handicapped child is entitled to parental benefit until the child is 7.

Problems of poverty, social exclusion, and educational underachievement are most acute among Romany families. Romany is an ethnic group which originally came to Eastern and Middle Europe from India and which has a characteristic language, cultural traditions, and way of family life. It is estimated that the Romany community constitutes 0.7 percent of the population. High rates of unemployment are recorded among this group and levels of education are low compared to Czechs, 84 percent of whom complete upper secondary education. Since 1993, the government has invested in several pilot projects for Romany children, and preparatory classes for socially or culturally disadvantaged children of 6–7 years of age (whose entry into compulsory school had been delayed). In 2004, 126 preparatory classes with 1,779 children were in operation. The Ministry of Education provides grants to NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) to support work with Romany parents and schools to increase the inclusion of Romany children in nursery schools.

Nursery School Curricula

In 2001, the Ministry of Education published a General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, which was made a binding document by the Educational Act in 2005. Each nursery school uses it as a basis for the development of its own school curriculum. Parents can significantly influence the orientation of the programs and participate in their implementation.

Early childhood education in the Czech Republic has the following main objectives: to develop the child's ability to learn, to teach him/her the basic values on which our society is based, to make him/her become independent and able to express him/herself as an individual in relation to its surroundings. It is possible to differentiate between different aspects of education according to the relations which the child gradually develops towards himself/herself, other people, and the world. The main components of the program are spontaneous games and physical activities, including outdoor activities and games, walks and excursions. Sleep is also an important element of the routine. Personal development and socialization are also supported by activities related to literary, artistic, and moral education. All activities emphasize emotional involvement and encourage a spirit of participation. Nursery schools are moving toward internal differentiation and individualization of their programs. Foreign language teaching, swimming courses, artistic activity, speech therapy, and programs for gifted children are also offered.

Teachers in Nursery Schools

More than 95 percent of teachers in Czech nursery schools have completed four years of training (15–19 years) in one of the seventeen upper secondary pedagogical schools in the country. Nursery school teachers obtain a full qualification from a four-year course with a standard school-leaving examination (maturitní zkouška) in secondary pedagogical schools (střední pedagogická škola). There is also the possibility of a three-year study at higher vocational schools with specialization in pedagogy at the tertiary level or three-year bachelor's or four to five-year master's degree course at pedagogic faculties (university level).

Since 1999, the workload for nursery school teachers has been decreased to thirty-one hours per week. Most work full-time. In 2004, the average wage of teachers in nursery schools was 76 percent of the average wage in the Czech Republic (the teacher wage in basic schools is 96% of the average wage). The status of a nursery school teacher is still lower than that of basic school teachers. Virtually all employees of the school are women, although the occupation is open to both sexes.

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Milada Rabušicová

The Sociology of Childhood in the Czech Republic

Childhood, as a specific social category, is a social construct undergoing change at the levels of both approach and existential context. As Mintz writes, “Every aspect of childhood—including children’s relationships with their parents and peers, their proportion of the population, and their paths through childhood and adulthood—has changed dramatically over the past four centuries.” Ways of looking at childhood and handling children thus vary historically and culturally. The Czech Republic has recently emerged from relatively dramatic social change, and as some research suggests, these changes are also reflected in a shift in the discursive representation of childhood. While during the forty-year era of the building of socialism the child was perceived largely as a passive being, malleable and subject to the authority of adults, in the present it tends to be viewed as a “little adult”. This trend offers the promise of partnership between children and adults on the one hand, but a risk of insufficient protection for the immature child on the other. In early childhood education, this shift in perceptions of the

child has been reflected in individualization of the approach to children and a requirement that their individual needs be acknowledged and considered in the institutional care provided for them.

The social change in the late 1980s and early 1990s has also had a profound effect on the life space in which Czech children are growing up; above all, the family domain metamorphoses have largely been shaped by changes in social politics and in the labor market and the domain of institutional care provided for preschool children.

The Impacts of Societal Transformation

The Czech Republic is a country in which the birthrate has been decreasing consistently since the 1970s, with a significant intensification of this trend after 1989. The total fertility rate was 1.89 in 1990, but only 1.18 in 2004, a value ranking among the lowest in Europe. The drop is often interpreted in the light of the transformation of the Czech society from a totalitarian state into a western democracy, connected with a new plurality of opportunities for social self-fulfillment of women. A distinct shift in values has occurred. Rabušic writes: "While in 1991 63% of Czech respondents agreed with the opinion that a woman must have children if her mission is to be fulfilled, only 44% of respondents shared the same opinion in 1999." This reflects the fact that the demographic structure of society is changing; the Czech society is aging. This is also evident from the numbers of children in the youngest age categories: while there were 393,000 children aged 0–2 in the Czech Republic in 1989, that number was only 278,000 in 2003. In 1989 there were 405,000 children aged 3–5, while in 2003 this number had dwindled to 267,000.

The value of family as perceived by the Czech society remains very high, however. Research on family behaviour among the younger generation (24–34 years) shows that three-quarters of respondents still prefer marriage as the most appropriate alternative for organizing their marital/partnership relations. An overwhelming majority intend to have children, most often two. Despite the fact that a majority of people wish to live in a marriage-based family with children, the number of people living in incomplete families has been growing. This fact has a significant impact, especially on children. In 2001, 27 percent of all dependent children were living in incomplete families. These families, emerging most frequently as a consequence of divorce, were usually provided for by the mother. This means that over one-quarter of Czech children are growing up deprived of the permanent presence of a father in the family. While there were 38 divorces per 100 concluded marriages in 1990, the rate has increased to 48 in 2003. This trend is largely regarded as a risk factor with respect to the future of the Czech population.

Although provision of help by grandparents to young families with children continues to be a relatively common phenomenon, relations between generations are clearly loosening in the long run. Multigenerational homes are getting scarcer. As far as care of preschool children are concerned, it is characterized by the new concept of maternalization of childhood—disregarding the fact of whether the

father or grandparents are part of the family, it is unequivocally the mother who is regarded as the primary person responsible for bringing up the children.

The State Role in Family Functioning

A number of original functions of the family have gradually shifted to the state. The family policy of the Czech Republic continues to be characterized by a high degree of redistribution of resources. The basis of this policy is the family allowance, varying in the amount of money according to family income and drawn by an overwhelming majority of families with dependent children. Each woman is entitled to a maternity leave of twenty-eight weeks after the birth of a child, drawing 68 percent of her previous wages during this period. Maternity leave is followed by parental leave, which can be drawn by the mother or the father up to 3 years of age of the child. The parent draws a fixed allowance of approximately 20 percent of the average wage during this period. If the parent does not insist that he/she be able return to her/his initial work position, he/she may draw this allowance until the child is 4 years old. Maternity and parental leave in combination in the Czech Republic are therefore very long compared with those in other European countries.

The national family policy also involves a system of public care of preschool children. Throughout the socialist era there was a very extensive network of crèches and nursery schools. In 1989 there were 7,328 nursery schools attended by 395,164 children and 1,313 crèches attended by 52,656 children. The network of nursery schools adjusted to the decreasing numbers of children after 1989, but their availability and popularity remained unchanged. During the school year 2002/2003, the total of 5,552 nursery schools were attended by 278,859 children. However, crèches were abolished, with only a few exceptions. There were only sixty crèches in the whole of the Czech Republic in 2003, with an overall capacity for 1,678 children aged 6 months to 3 years. While in 1989 crèches were attended by 13.4 percent of all children aged 0–2, the rate was only 0.6 percent in 2003.

The employment rate among Czech women has traditionally been very high. As the socialist Czechoslovakia stressed engagement of women in the work process, mothers often returned to work soon after giving birth, placing their children in crèches. An important changeover occurred after 1989, however. Mothers are taking advantage of the long parental leave offered by the state. Remaining home to provide the child with full-time care up to 3 years of age is currently the strongly dominant maternal strategy. As the demand for crèches decreased, these institutions were gradually closing down without being replaced by another alternative.

Ideologies Underlying Czech Family Policies

It may be said that in this respect the Czech Republic has recently undergone a kind of development contrary to that in most other European countries. The dominant ideology of family policies in postwar Western Europe was based on emphasizing the primary role of the mother, inspired by thinkers such as Sigmund Freud or Bowlby, and this resulted in the imperative that the woman stay at home

with her children. It was only at the end of the 1960s that the need for women's right to professional life was voiced and resulted in an increase in the number of early childhood education institutions. In postwar Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, engagement of women, including mothers, in the workforce was encouraged, based on the assumption that children can benefit from collective education more than from individual education. This assumption was often motivated by political and economic arguments rather than psychological, pedagogical, or medical ones. The political change in 1989 then swayed the imaginary pendulum the other way.

The current situation nevertheless is coming under criticism, the argument being that the long period during which women stay home results in their being poorly positioned in the labor market and leads to a social risk. Sociologists call for harmonization of family and work life; research shows that establishing harmony between work and family obligations is made possible above all by work flexibility—the degree to which the employee may choose when and where he/she will perform his/her work. However, this flexibility is offered by only a few employers in the Czech Republic. Part-time work is rare as well: only 4 percent of women worked part-time in 2002. These circumstances, along with the negligible number of crèches and the state subsidies provided to mothers taking care of their young children, are the reasons why an overwhelming majority of children up to three remain at home with their mothers.

Maternal Entry into the Workforce

Most mothers, however, wish to return to the labor market as soon as their child reaches 3 years of age. This moment usually comes when the child enters nursery school. Seventy-six percent of children aged 3 enter nursery schools and nursery schools are attended by as many as 95 percent of 5-year-olds. Institutional education is regarded as something children of this age can profit from significantly. Nursery schools are very popular among Czech parents and considered to be providing good services. Parents are generally satisfied with them. Their existence has been part of a deeply rooted tradition of public care of children in early childhood in Bohemia and Moravia since the nineteenth century.

Other forms of nonmaternal care of preschool children are little developed in the Czech society, and very little empirical data is available on their actual distribution. Foreign research shows that mothers prefer babysitting by a family member (the child's father if possible) for times when they cannot take care of their children themselves. In reality, however, children are more often cared for away from home, mostly in group settings. Czech data suggests that childminding by family members is preferred ahead of crèches, reflecting the current reality. Childminding by paid private persons has been a marginal phenomenon in the Czech Republic so far.

At the same time, an actively developing sector of care for the youngest children is represented by maternal centers and mothers' clubs—facilities attended by mothers on maternal leave and their children, combining a joint program for mothers and children with childminding. This is an innovative compromise: the

mother remains with her child while escaping social isolation and the child gets into contact with a larger peer group even before entering nursery school.

It may be said, in summary, that currently an overwhelming majority of children in the Czech Republic participate in institutions providing early childhood education. There is, however, a fundamental divide between crèches and nursery schools. The network of crèches is currently little developed; children up to three stay home with their mothers and parents are not too inclined to use crèche services. In contrast, nursery schools are viewed very positively and are attended by almost all children aged 3–6. Other forms of institutional and individual non-maternal child care have been a marginal phenomenon in the Czech Republic, but their dynamic growth may be expected in the future.

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Klára Šed'ová

Theories of Early Childhood Education—Pedagogy

The theory of early childhood education in Bohemia and Moravia has a long tradition. Its development has reflected the changing approaches to children and the changing environment, both in the family and educational institutions.

Johannes Amos Comenius

The primary theoretician was Johannes Amos **Comenius** (1592–1670), who is regarded as one of the founding fathers of modern European pedagogy and is world renowned as author of a conceptual framework for early childhood education. In his treatise *“Informatorium scholae maternae”* (1633) Comenius proposed an integrated concept of early childhood education as a necessary stage preceding general education. He regarded early childhood education as an integral part of lifelong personal development. His concept of early childhood education was designed primarily for parents to improve family upbringing and he allowed for establishment of public education institutions later. The objective of education as he saw it was harmony, which he perceived as consonance of humans with

nature, other people, and the God, that is, understanding the global picture of life and the world.

In Comenius' concept the child is a being entitled to care and protection and a right that others empathize with his/her needs, a right to a loving relationship providing him/her with a sense of safety, and a right to be respected. Implementation of these rights is a duty of the adults. The child is to be provided with all this as a basic and self-evident prerequisite of his/her further development. For the child's development to approach harmony, it must be based on Comenius' basic assumption—naturalness of children's development. This implies the need to create conditions so that the child may develop most naturally in parallel with natural development so as to uphold the principle "Let everything flow freely, let violence be far from things."

For Comenius nonviolence does not mean passive submission of the educator to evolutionary characteristics of the child; rather it means active but very sensitive guidance. The balance between freedom and guidance, spontaneity and discipline recommended by Comenius shows his refined pedagogical sensitivity. This also implies an emphasis on what educators should focus on. If the child is to be educated to achieve a certain goal, the educators, too, must strive to attain the goal. The relationship between an educator and a child is a result not only of the education, but also of the extent to which the educator understands the child. "Like a physician, a cultivator of the young is a mere servant, not a lord of the nature."

The child also is not merely a passive recipient of the efforts of the educator. He/she plays an important and active role, acknowledged to him/her by the emphasis on creativity and activity. The life experience of the child, associated with sensory perception in the beginning, is applied and developed in play. Comenius regarded play in early childhood as just as important as food and sleep. He recommended play based on movement and imitation as preparation for future work activities. He was opposed to violating children's naturalness by guiding children to artificial inaction and passivity. His curriculum is based on the specifics of children's development and respects these objectives, too. The stress is on the educational content as a whole, not just some of its components. It emphasizes (1) healthy physical development of the child, (2) development of his/her fine and gross motor skills, (3) sensory development, (4) development of cognitive processes, abilities, and skills, (5) systemization of knowledge in 6-year-olds, (6) gradual development and purity of children's language, (7) aesthetic education with stress on music, (8) religious education and elements of piety, (9) education in ethics with stress on discipline, obedience, morals and virtues, and (10) emotional education.

Comenius recommended free development of children, but under nonviolent and wise guidance. He also addressed the issue of dichotomy between learning/education and faith. The three sources of knowledge that are given to humans according to him—the Bible, the world, and ourselves—are mediated mainly by reason. This means that neglect or suppression of cognitive development constrains the use of these sources, which constrains the fullness of faith in its turn. Faith and education complement each other to create a fuller unity of the whole.

The Nineteenth Century

The foundations of Czech national tradition in early childhood education had been laid by Comenius almost 200 years before Czech public early childhood care started to be organized. The period of establishment of national school systems in the nineteenth century had an impact on how the youngest children were brought up, too. Care of preschool children ceased to be a matter exclusively of the family, and became a subject of interest for the whole society. Institutions implementing the concept of community child care and education of young children were initially designed for children from poor families, but the interest in public early childhood education grew among higher strata of the society as the nineteenth century proceeded.

The newly emergent institutions were called “childhouses” (“dětince” from “děti”—children) or “growhouses” (“pěstovny” from “pěstovat”—“grow”). They may be divided into nurseries, kindergartens, and maternity schools according to their character and history of development.

The oldest institution was a nursery, whose initial form in Europe may be characterized as a purely childminding, welfare institution. Czech nurseries, however, tended to differ from this description from the very beginning thanks to the efforts of Jan Vladimír Svoboda, who developed and implemented a new concept of nursery operation in his first Czech nursery “Na hrádku” in Prague in 1832, in which the educational characteristics prevailed. He went beyond the charitable nature of nurseries by bringing in children from well-to-do families so that they could learn the elements of the trivium (reading, writing, and arithmetic) in Czech before entering school, where the language of instruction was German.

The National Enlightenment (movement in support of the Czech language and culture that developed in response to Germanization pressures of the Hapsburg monarchy in Bohemia), in the beginning of the nineteenth century pursued from the very beginning the idea that Czech children should obtain at least the very basics of education in their mother tongue. A treatise by Svoboda called *Nursery or primordial, practical, self-explanatory, versatile teaching to the little ones for real perfection of reason and cultivation of the heart pointing to reading, arithmetics and technical drawing for teachers, fosterers and parents*, written in 1839, presents an entirely original concept, although it was influenced by Comenius. According to this idea, children are taught and educated adequately to their age, above all through a system of purposefully designed and systematically used games so that they obtain a body of knowledge based on immediate experience. Adequate procedures built around facts help children to acquire even the elements of the trivium. It may be said that Svoboda combines and develops Comenius’ idea of maternity school and the idea of elementary school in the mother tongue. Each requirement from “Informatorium” by Comenius was methodologically elaborated by Svoboda in his “Nursery”. The brain, the heart, and the hand were to be trained simultaneously and the whole concept of education was organically interconnected by education in ethics.

Svoboda’s efforts to enhance national education represented an important milestone in early childhood and elementary education in Bohemia and Moravia.

Thanks to his influence a strong Czech school of methodologists of early childhood education was established.

German Influence

In Bohemia and Moravia, where a significant proportion of the population spoke German, typical German-like early childhood education institutions were established, too—Fröbel's kindergartens (Fridrich Fröbel 1782–1852). The first German kindergarten opened in Prague in 1864. Kindergartens were first attended by children from well-to-do families and the poor were admitted later. These settings gradually attempted to attract Czech children as well. But because only German was spoken there, they were regarded as a tool of Germanization efforts and the Czech patriotic public opposed them fiercely.

The Pedagogy of the Czech Nursery School

The institution of the Czech nursery school emerged as a counterbalance to the system of German kindergartens. The first Czech *maternity school* was founded at St. James's in Prague in 1869. The number of maternity schools grew over time, reaching 249 by 1897.

Maternity schools were designed especially to play the national-awareness-raising task. They were based on the Czech system of education, but their authors took inspiration from three well-known concepts: Svoboda's, Fröbel's, and the French system. The application of the concept developed by Svoboda consisted mainly of taking over the global approach to early childhood education, leading to harmonization of the physical and psychic aspects in child development with stress on cognitive education and gradual preparation for reading and writing. Fröbel's methodology provided the Czech maternity school with inspiration in terms of children's handiwork activities, gardening, and an emphasis on play as the number one educational tool. The French tradition contributed the organizational structure of maternity schools, stressing the schooling nature of work. Apart from that, the importance of instruction in morals and the loving attitude of the fosterer to the child were emphasized. Although the concept of Czech maternity school was developed eclectically, the efforts that contributed to its formation can be evaluated as balanced since the individual sources were used to contribute those elements that had proved most vital.

The Imperial Education Act of 1869 granted all children the right to compulsory education in their mother tongue. The Act thus cancelled the necessity to teach Czech children the trivium in Czech prior to enrolling in schools where German was spoken. Individual types of early childhood institutions started to differentiate more markedly (maternity schools—educatory goal, nurseries—care-taking goal) and to deviate from the didactic goal of elementary school (compulsory primary school). A state directive specified the respective functions of maternity schools, nurseries, and crèches and their mutual relations in detail. Maternity school was presented as a public and free-of-charge institution, which made it possible to enroll children from all income groups. The trivium was withdrawn from maternity

schools and the curriculum was specified with more consideration for the early age of the children.

All in all, this period may be evaluated as a very important one for development of institutional early childhood care of children in Bohemia and Moravia, since early childhood education came to be understood as part of education as such and responsibility for it started to shift from the family to the nationwide context.

Reformist Tendencies in Pedagogy

The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century were characterized by development of reformist tendencies in pedagogy, which among other things concentrated on the issues of early childhood education. These tendencies developed in reaction to the so-called fröbelism (a deformed version of the concept developed by Fröbel), the school-like character of maternity schools, and their excessive intellectualism. What became stronger were pedocentric trends emphasizing the child's personality as the central point of educatory activities, also termed as the "Copernicus turn" in education. This approach required that the goal of education be oriented to intellectual development as well as practical skills and development of personality traits. The curriculum was individuated and differentiated with respect to the child's personality. The approach to development was activity-centred, that is, the child participated in his/her education and development by his/her own activity. The need for imposing discipline externally was restricted and the relation between the adult and the child was based on trust and mutual respect. An atmosphere of joyful activity was to be a guarantee of progress and the success of each individual child.

This reformist spirit gained dominance in the newly emerged Czechoslovak Republic (1918) as well. Reformist efforts affected all types of school, including nursery schools. As in other European countries attempts to integrate nursery schools into the larger system of education, that is, to connect early childhood education with other stages of school education occurred in what was then Czechoslovakia.

The search for a new concept of nursery school in the period between the world wars culminated in the formation of two reformist trends: the radical one, accentuating especially the didactic point of view (including an attitude approving the teaching of reading and writing in nursery school) in the work of nursery schools, and the moderate one, emphasizing the preparatory and family-like nature of nursery school. These differing concepts coexisted until 1939, when the very lively and heterogeneous pedagogic activities were interrupted by World War II.

The approval of the Integrated School Act in 1948 (the first educational act after the coup) implemented the prewar requirement to make nursery schools a stage equal to other stages of education. The number of nursery schools grew rapidly, and almost 100 percent of the population of children attended them over the next forty years. As far as quality was concerned, the detailed methodological elaboration of individual aspects of education and the systemic planning and formulation of the target requirements in children's development were regarded as steps forward. However, negative consequences of this excessive "integration" became

manifest as time passed. Implementation of an integrated nursery school—from goals, content, and forms to organization and methods—suppressed the personality and creativity of the teacher as well as the child and provided no scope for respect for the child's individuality. Moreover, strong ideological trends proscribed by the official Marxist doctrine were put through in nursery schools just as at other levels of education.

One absolutely essential requirement that was expressed by pedagogical approaches after 1989 was the one of "freedom, decentralization and removal of unification". The "Personality Developing Model of Early Childhood Education" (Osobnostně rozvíjející model předškolní výchovy) that began in 1993 was conceived along these lines. It defines nursery school as an open system akin to education in the family. The general atmosphere of nursery schools is to combine humanization with democratization. The attitude toward the child stresses his/her absolute uniqueness, with social roots. Nursery school is to be characterized by partnership between the teacher and the child, open communication, considerable scope for multifaceted activities of the child, and positive motivation.

The last stage of the transformation of Czech nursery school into its present shape is the approval of the General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (2004) as a curricular document specifying the characteristics shared by early childhood education as well as the opportunity for differentiation and application of the specifics of individual institutions for early childhood education. It identifies the goal of nursery school as facilitation of further life path for the child, creation of prerequisites for further education, and maximum support to individual development of individual children.

In summary, during its history the Czech pedagogy of early childhood has coped especially with the issue of naturalness and freedom and the degree of their application to the education of young children. The current concept can be viewed as balanced in this respect.

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Public Policies for Early Childhood Education

The present form of early childhood education in the Czech Republic was significantly influenced by the political, economic, and social change that affected the whole educational environment after the revolution of 1989. Strategic goals for the global transformation of the Czech educational system started to be implemented based on the following principles:

- depoliticization of education;
- recognition of the civil rights of children, pupils, students, and their parents to choice of an educational path depending on children's individual skills and interests and their right to choose an appropriate school;
- abolishment of the educational monopoly of the state and establishment of private and religious nursery schools;
- quantitative expansion of the network of public schools and qualitative diversity of educational opportunities and formation of a competitive environment in education;
- implementation of funding in the educational system based on the normative method

The flow of full freedom in education, and application of market principles in satisfaction of educational demand and in funding, characterized by liberalism and deregulation, led to a gradual internal and external reform also in early childhood education. Pedagogic discussions yielded the following major topics that proved to be of key importance for further development of educational policies concerning child care and education of preschool children:

- importance and place of early childhood education within the system of education;
- early childhood education availability and funding;
- curriculum for early childhood education and quality of provision of education;
- qualification training for teachers involved in early childhood education.

Each of these topics has a fifteen-year history mirroring the fermentation of opinions and political accents in a society that was undergoing a transformation from a totalitarian regime into a democracy.

Importance and the Place of Early Childhood Education in the Educational System

Opinions about the importance and the place of early childhood education in the whole educational system were consolidating in the course of the 1990s. The opinion that early childhood education should become part of the Czech system of education and as such should be defined as level 0, that is, the preprimary level, in accordance with international classification (ISCED 97), gradually came to prevail. The existing Educational Act (2004) codifies this approach starting in 2005, specifying the goals of early childhood education as follows:

Early childhood education enhances development of personality of the pre-school child, contributes to his/her healthy emotional, cognitive and physical development and acquisition of the basic rules of communication, basic values and interpersonal relations. Early childhood education prepares basic conditions for further education. Early childhood education helps to make up for irregularities in the development of children prior to enrolment to primary education and provides children with special educational needs with special pedagogic care.

The position of early childhood education in the Czech Republic has also been strengthened by the newly formulated general principles of Czech and European educational policies, especially the concepts of lifelong learning and equal educational opportunities. Both these concepts basically mean a paradigmatic transformation in the approach to the place and importance of education as such, including early childhood education, since they view them in the context of the whole life path and in the context of all opportunities that may be open to people.

Thanks to this shift, the opinion that early childhood education should be made compulsory from 5 years of age surfaced in the discussions. Since this opinion did not win in the end, the current solution is the following: each child has a right, not an obligation, to education in the last year before the start of the compulsory school attendance. And conversely, each municipality is obliged to provide early childhood education for all children whose parents apply for it.

Another much discussed topic was interconnecting early childhood education and compulsory primary education, or nursery school and primary school, at the level of subject matter and potentially also organization. Due to fears that nursery schools might adopt the “scholastic approach” excessively, this interconnection has not been implemented to any great extent. On the contrary, the stress instead is on making the first grades of compulsory school more like early childhood education by emphasizing natural individual differences in children’s maturation and learning, more freedom in terms of learning content and the pace of learning, avoidance of classification, and so forth.

Early Childhood Education Availability and Funding

Thanks to the long tradition of building the network of nursery schools and crèches throughout the socialist era, availability of early childhood education was not generally viewed as a major problem. It is nevertheless a fact that the situation did diversify after 1989, for demographic, geographic, social, and economic reasons. Some regions experienced a shortage of nursery schools, and especially crèches, because some of the state-owned enterprises that had established and sponsored them failed to survive. The numbers of preschool children began to shrink as a consequence of demographic trends, which also led to the closing of crèches, and to a lesser extent nursery schools (see entry on child care for 0- to 3-year-olds). The number of nursery schools dropped by about 22 percent compared with the period before 1989; this trend was most significant in the countryside, where nursery school availability went down radically. The current availability seems more or less equal to the demand, with no major discrepancies. The potential solution is fully in the hands of local governments.

The situation in terms of the economic and social availability of early childhood education is somewhat different. Early childhood education in the Czech Republic is funded partly from municipal budgets and partly from payments by families; the existing financial participation of parents is generally regarded as acceptable. The charges are reduced for lower income families and some families do not pay at all. Despite this, in the words of OECD experts, “guaranteeing the general availability of early childhood education, especially for children from socially and socio-culturally challenged families, is a top priority for the future in the Czech Republic.” It is turning out that parents from families challenged in these ways

do not care for early childhood education for their children and do not send their children to nursery school on their own accord. There is no mechanism to make them to do so, only long-term education and motivation can be applied, but they have just started to be paid adequate attention. The fundamental argument is that children generally receive child care in early childhood education institutions comparable with child care within the family, and above all that children from socio-culturally challenged environments will undoubtedly profit from being in a crèche or a nursery school.

A Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and the Quality of Provision of Education

The beginning of the 1990s in early childhood education was characterized by making the curriculum for early childhood education entirely open. The syllabi valid up to that time were withdrawn, and a liberal approach was followed under which the headmaster in cooperation with the teachers was to set a curriculum for the particular nursery school. A whole array of alternative programs attractive to the Czech pedagogic public were offered (Waldorf pedagogy, Montessori pedagogy, Dalton Plan, Step by Step Program, and others). It nevertheless started to become evident that many nursery schools interpreted the openness and freedom they were given in curriculum selection as an opportunity to “do hardly anything” or, in other words, to abandon systematic and purposeful guidance of children and keep their educational efforts to a minimum. This compromised the quality of provision of early childhood education, which until then had been generally regarded as high.

The relatively turbulent pedagogical as well as political discussion finally settled down, and led to the opinion that a general curriculum must be developed—in terms both of a general compulsory educational offering, and of the setting of conditions (organization, personnel, material, mental health related, safety, etc.), adherence to which should be compulsory for nursery schools and for the municipalities establishing them. This opinion was also supported by the conclusions of the expert assessment of the standard of early childhood education in the Czech Republic organized by OECD (2000). According to these conclusions, development of a general curriculum at the national level would provide the grounding needed to guarantee the quality of provision of early childhood education, surveillance of how educational goals are met, and comparability of pedagogical processes and outputs.

These discussions and recommendations led to the development and implementation of the General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (2004). Its fulfillment, allowing for diversified school curricula, has become an obligation for all nursery schools in the Czech Republic. The reservations of the lay and pedagogic public about this requirement have now been replaced by positive attitudes.

Qualification Training for Teachers Involved in Early Childhood Education

The increased demands of the work together with the higher responsibility and extended authorities of teachers in nursery schools have provoked the question

of how their qualification training should change. Besides application of the curriculum for early childhood education, teachers are expected to use it as a basis for developing curricula adequate to the particular groups of children committed to their care, their individual needs, the requirements of parents, and conditions of the particular nursery school. Teachers are also expected to have diagnostic competencies and communicate with parents to a greater extent, being able to provide them with counselling support regarding the development of their child.

A desire that such demanding occupational requirements should be underlain by more demanding and longer occupational training, shifting the training of teachers for early childhood education from the present secondary level of education to the tertiary one (university or nonuniversity studies), emerged by the end of the 1990s. Again, this goal was supported by an OECD expert report on the state of early childhood education and child care for preschool children in the Czech Republic (2000).

However, this goal was not fully accepted. This was due, paradoxically, to disapproval on the part of nursery school teachers themselves, who feared they would have to complete another demanding program of studies. It was due also to opposition on the part of secondary pedagogic schools, who until then had a monopoly on the training of nursery school teachers. The situation resulted in a compromise acknowledging both types of education: at the secondary level (secondary pedagogic schools) and at the tertiary level (higher vocational schools and bachelor programs at universities) (see Teacher Preparation entry). The trend is toward preparation at the tertiary level, which should strengthen occupational skills of nursery school teachers, their social status, and their economic situation while making their status comparable with that of teachers at higher levels of education.

The upbringing and education of preschool children are currently regarded as one of the best developed areas of care for the young generation in the Czech Republic in terms of legislation, educational content, and organization. This does not mean that there is a shortage of topics needing further discussion. These topics include especially the availability of child care for children from 0 to 3 years of age, the availability of child care for socioeconomically challenged children, greater parent involvement, and better qualification of nurses in crèches and teachers in nursery schools.

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Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education

In the Czech Republic family is regarded the basic, natural, and the most crucial environment for a child at an early age. This is especially the case for children up to 3 years of age and the prevailing arrangement of things reflects this: a great majority of children remain at home, cared for by the mother or another member of the family. The family policy of the state makes this possible through a long maternity/parental leave lasting until the child is 4 years old. For this reason, there is no extensive network of crèches in the Czech Republic to provide infant and toddler care (see entry on child care for 0- to 3-year-olds). Various religious and private initiatives and activities of nongovernmental organizations offer parents, mainly mothers, different opportunities for spending time with their children within a group, with the support of experts. For example, parents may form various “mums’ clubs,” “work-out clubs for parents and children,” “consulting rooms for healthy children’s diet,” etc. Beyond the different debates about the appropriateness of this “family” arrangement are discussions surrounding the issues of equal opportunities for women and men, support to family as such, and the development of the demographic situation characterized by a low birthrate. However, the prevailing opinion today in the Czech Republic is that a close bond between the child and the mother is the most crucial element for the development of a very young child.

The situation concerning children from three until the start of compulsory school attendance at six is radically different. Most Czech families with children of this age take advantage of public early childhood education institutions, that is, mainly nursery schools. The proportion of children attending nursery schools ranges between 67 percent for 3-year-olds and 98 percent for 5-year-olds. This number demonstrates that the nursery school attendance is close to universal in the last year before the start of compulsory school. However, families from some socially and economically challenged groups, especially Romany families, tend not to send their children to nursery schools. Various programs have been developed to motivate these parents. These programs include the so-called “preparatory classes” where these children are given special care and support and where Romany assistants help.

When parents delegate their caring and upbringing authority to experts in public early childhood education institutions to the extent found in the Czech Republic, the subject of the relations and cooperation between these two institutions—the family and the nursery school, or the parents and the teachers—must be addressed. For the most part, these relations had not been regarded as a problem or as deserving much attention until the 1990s, when political change was brought about by the “Velvet Revolution” of 1989. The prevailing attitude was straightforward: “There are experts in nursery schools, just like in other school institutions, who know best how to take care of a child; let parents respect their approaches and intents.” Parents largely endeavored to satisfy the requirements of schools in the sense that can be summed up as “Take care of the child so that he/she comes to school or the nursery school on time and well-prepared.” The (nursery) school took charge of the child and used its professional methods to enhance his/her intellectual and other development, but also his/her discipline

and social integration. This “labour division” usually worked quite well and if not, the participants tended to regard it as an example of the uneven distribution of power between these two institutions. The model in which the state takes on responsibilities originally belonging to the family through its institutions was common and more or less accepted.

Just as in other spheres of life within Czech society, much changed about this model during the recent years. It may even be said that the situation changed radically, since parents have started to be referred to as partners, collaborators, clients, and even citizens, who—as follows from the principle of civil society—may actively participate in the life of any public institution, including schools/nursery schools.

Policy

This new approach to family involvement was also reflected in school legislation of the Czech Republic. The relation between early childhood education institutions and parents is currently defined by the General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, which came into effect as part of the Educational Act of 2004. According to the General Curriculum, the purpose of institutional early childhood education is to *supplement upbringing in the family* and in close cooperation with the family, helping to provide the child with various and adequate stimuli for his/her active development and learning. According to this binding curriculum, the participation of parents in early childhood education is fully satisfactory if the following conditions are met:

- Relations between teachers and parents are characterized by mutual trust and openness, goodwill, understanding, respect and willingness to cooperate. The cooperation is based on the principle of partnership.
- Teachers respond to particular needs of individual children/families and try to understand them and meet their wishes.
- Parents can participate in the activities of the nursery school, take part in various events, and interact with their children as part of their play if they choose to. They are informed of all events and activities in the nursery schools regularly and to a sufficient extent. If they give an indication of interest, they may contribute to the process of program planning, help to solve problems that have occurred, etc.
- Teachers inform parents of the proficiency of their child as well as of his/her individual learning and development progress. They coordinate with parents for joint action in providing the child with upbringing and education.
- Teachers protect the privacy of the family and act discreetly as far as internal issues they are aware of are concerned. They behave toward parents with thoughtfulness and tact, realizing they are handling confidential information. They do not interfere in the life and privacy of the family, avoiding excessive ardour and the giving of unsolicited advice.
- The nursery school supports family care and helps parents by sharing the care of their child; it offers parents counselling services and all kinds of educational activities concerning upbringing and education of preschool children.

Research Initiatives

In the last fifteen years, several research projects have focused on exploration and analysis of the relations between parents and teachers, including teachers of nursery schools, and on parent involvement. Results from one of these research projects served as preparatory material for the National Report on the State of Early Childhood Upbringing, Education and Care of Pre-school Age in the Czech Republic, 2000, prepared within the Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy organized by OECD. A questionnaire survey was conducted with 164 nursery school directors, 733 teachers, and 1,433 parents of children attending nursery schools throughout the Czech Republic. It addressed, among other things, issues like parents' opinions on the functioning and program of their nursery school, satisfaction with teacher/parent cooperation, and the forms taken in these relations.

Parents' opinions about the functioning and program of the nursery school. The responses show a general satisfaction of parents with their nursery school (99% of parents), its organization and program, as well as how well the parents were informed of nursery school activities. Parents expressed their unequivocal trust towards nursery school teachers (99%) and saw the nursery school environment as appropriate and universally beneficial to their child (97%). Two-thirds of parents believed their child received enough individual care in the nursery school. The satisfaction of parents with nursery schools corresponds with the assessment on the part of teachers and directors. Teachers and directors (99%) believe that parents are unequivocally or largely satisfied with nursery school and the services it provides for them and their children.

Satisfaction with teacher/parent cooperation and forms of this cooperation. Parents were more satisfied than nursery school teachers with teacher/parent cooperation. This relationship was assessed as excellent or very good by 60 percent of parents and 51 percent of teachers. Teachers indicated that they expected parents to show more interest, openness, goodwill, and involvement. Parents primarily care about how their child feels in the nursery school, which is understandable. Leaving the program offered to their children in the nursery school aside, however, this is where their interest usually ends. Thus parents continue to leave all responsibility up to the nursery school, which may be interpreted as an assumption that their child receives good care during the day and as a sign of their full trust in the quality of care provided and the professional skills of the teachers. Other possible causes can be identified, however, including lack of time, little experience and skills in communication with nursery school teachers, a certain convenience, and a tendency to shift responsibility. The forms of cooperation and communication mostly include usual and traditional activities such as presentations for parents, parent meetings, and individual consultations. These are forms in which the role of parents is rather passive. Activities requiring more active participation of parents (e.g., an open house with a program, joint events for the whole family, parents as class assistants, etc.) are much less frequent.

Based on this research, it may be said that parents are largely satisfied clients receiving services offered by nursery schools in the Czech Republic. The situation seems not to motivate them enough to be active participants in the process of providing care, upbringing, and education to their children in nursery schools.

A very similar conclusion has been arrived at by another research project undertaken in 2002–2003, which used sophisticated methods to find out the position of parents with respect to school and nursery school. The research was based on established theoretical concepts characterizing parents as clients, educational and social partners, citizens, or “trouble-making parents.” The results showed that with respect to nursery schools, the client role of parents prevails unequivocally (analogous to primary school), from the point of view of both school representatives and parents themselves. The role implies that parents are interested to such an extent as to choose the school for their child, desiring the best teachers and the best care possible for their child. Parents also want the school to provide an adequate amount of information to them. The parent activity usually does not go beyond this degree of interest. Parents are also perceived as educational partners (57%) in nursery schools, with more frequency than in other types of school (first and second stage of elementary school). This points to good potential for further development of cooperation between nursery school and parents as they are parents willing to participate, help, exchange information about the child with the teacher, and support the child in his/her development and learning. And finally, parents are perceived in nursery schools as “the trouble-making parents” (42%) if they act too independently, do not show enough interest in nursery school, and do not communicate much with teachers.

The research results described above present a largely positive image of relations between parents and nursery school teachers, testifying to satisfaction and perhaps even some balance of power. As far as parent involvement in the sense of active sharing, cooperation, and partnership is concerned, however, there is some scope for further development and improvement.

Cooperation between teachers in nursery schools and parents of children attending nursery schools has recently been considered one of the priorities of pedagogical work involving preschool children in the Czech Republic. It is generally believed that of all educational institutions, the focus, organization, and operation of nursery schools offer the most favourable formats for providing good communication and potential cooperation between parents and teachers. It is, nevertheless, important that both parties work collaboratively to achieve this cooperation.

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Milada Rabušicová

Quality of Provision of Early Childhood Education

The importance of improvement, monitoring, and assessment of quality of education has recently been increasing in the Czech Republic. This growing importance has to do with the introduction of the two-level (national and school) curriculum and therefore with the opportunity to choose an individual educational path, which is also associated with a great deal of responsibility on the part of individual nursery schools, or their teachers, for the quality of provided education. This involves not only *external quality assessment* performed by central or regional inspection. Because schools do not work on the basis of any normative document, but every nursery school develops a school curriculum of its own, there is a need for feedback on the functioning of the whole system inside the nursery school. It is therefore why *internal assessment* is used, the general goal being to make self-evaluation gradually become a natural part of work of each nursery school.

Specification of Early Childhood Education Quality in Documents

The question of how to define and assess quality of early childhood education in the Czech Republic is currently addressed by legal regulations (the Educational Act, orders, directives) and the national curriculum (General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, GC ECE).

Structural quality and availability of early childhood education. Legal regulations concentrate on defining the *structural quality*, which can be expressed in terms of objective and measurable variables (size and structure of children's groups, number of children per teacher, education of teachers in early childhood education, etc.), along with the *quality of services* provided for parents (availability, service hours, opportunity to choose from among different institutions, and curricula). The main indicators of structural quality of early childhood education in the Czech Republic are the following:

- Early childhood education in the Czech Republic is provided for children from 3 to 6 years of age. If a child is not mature enough, compulsory school attendance may be deferred.
- Nursery schools have three grades. Children from different grades may be assigned into a single classroom. A nursery school group may have up to twenty-four children. The limit is lower if children with special educational needs attend the group.
- Nursery schools providing daylong, part-time, or around-the-clock services may be established. Service hours may be adjusted in line with the needs of the children

depending on local conditions or wishes and needs of parents. A child may enroll into a nursery school at any time throughout the school year.

- Nursery schools provide meals for children for a fee.
- Teachers working in nursery schools are mostly high school educated, some of them are university-educated (see separate entry on teacher preparation).
- Parents can choose from among alternative general curricula and different school curricula.

As far as availability of early childhood education is concerned, the intention in the Czech Republic is to guarantee each preschool child a legal right to early childhood education and a feasible opportunity to apply this right in practice. This is evidenced by the following legal provisions:

- Early childhood education is not compulsory.
- Each municipality is obliged to guarantee nursery school placement to all children whose parents apply for it.
- Nursery school charges may be lowered or waived for children from socially challenged families.

Process quality of early childhood education. The national curriculum (GC ECE) deals with issues of process quality and quality of results achieved. It is formulated so as to provide an integrated set of the main criteria, which are in line with valid legislation and define the desired quality of early childhood education in terms of forms and methods of work, educational goals, content, conditions, and results to be achieved. These are largely qualitative criteria, applicable in both internal and external evaluation of nursery schools and the education they provide.

GC ECE specifies methods and forms of work corresponding to the specific needs and possibilities of preschool children. It defines general educational goals to be met. It describes the level of key skills attainable during early childhood education. It identifies the subject matter to be offered to children, in terms of practical and intellectual activities and basic domains of elementary knowledge. GC ECE also specifies the expected outputs as the assumed results of early childhood education. It describes material, organizational, personal, psychic health-related, and pedagogical conditions affecting both the process and the results of education. GC ECE also specifies the main principles to apply when developing school curricula and, last but not least, the basic labor laws for teachers involved in early childhood education and their responsibilities toward children and their parents. GC ECE also specifies risks that may pose a threat to the success of educational plans of teachers and diminish the quality of education provision. This currently represents the basic framework for achievement and assessment of quality of the process of education in nursery schools.

Assessment of Provision of Education

The Educational Act and its implementing regulations (orders, directives) together with the General Curriculum sets a framework for evaluation and assessment of school curricula and of the quality of provision of education by individual nursery schools from the position of external supervision (inspection) as well as internal control (self-evaluation).

External quality assessment. Assessment of quality of early childhood education from the position of inspection is to be based on the rules inspectors apply when planning and performing their inspection activities. Inspectors monitor and assess school curricula and the process and results of education provision. They evaluate adherence to legal and implementing regulations, analyze and assess whether the school curriculum is in line with the requirements (formal and content-wise) of the General Curriculum. The inspectors check the correspondence between the planned curriculum and its implementation, observe and evaluate the course of education (methods and forms, quality of interaction and communication) as well as the achieved results. They check and assess the methods and effectiveness of planning, the methodological procedures used by teachers, evaluation activities, management and supervisory activities of the schoolmaster, etc. The school curriculum and its quality are evaluated as a whole.

Internal quality assessment. Rules for assessment of quality of provision of education from the position of the nursery school (self-evaluation) are set by GC ECE. The school is obliged to perform self-evaluation activities in a process of continuous self-regulation of its own educational work with a view to increasing its quality. These activities mediate a better understanding of the processes in the school and their regulation based on feedback (improvement).

A survey of the evaluation activities is a compulsory part of the school curriculum. The survey should include the following:

- a list of activities at the school level (especially conditions of education, goals and objectives of the school curriculum, and work of the pedagogic staff are evaluated);
- a survey of activities at the children's group level (the educational offerings, the proficiency of the group as a whole are evaluated, teachers contribute their self-assessment);
- a survey of monitoring and evaluation of results (developmental and learning progress of individual children is evaluated).

The concrete subject of self-evaluation is especially the implemented curriculum or the course of the process of education and its results. Self-evaluation may in this respect focus on many areas, e.g., on evaluation of the interrelationships between the school curriculum and the group curriculum, of the educational offerings, the material, health and mental health related, safety, organizational and other conditions, the pedagogical style and school climate, the forms and methods of work, cooperation with family, fulfillment of individual needs of children, supplementary program, or the offer of standard services. Practical evaluation consists of a continuous use of feedback on the part of the teacher. The teacher poses questions systematically and looks for answers to these questions, reflects on the ways of obtaining these answers, ways of collecting information and evaluating the monitored phenomena (which forms and methods and/or techniques to use). Commonly used methods include interviews, discussions, sessions, observations, class monitoring, educational plan, or class plan analysis, resulting in minutes from class observation, various kinds of questionnaires and survey cards, assessment reports, notes from observation, audio and video records, all kinds of artifacts by children (two- and three-dimensional didactic sheets, drawings, handmade products by the children etc.), notes and commentaries of teachers.

The basic criteria to apply during the process of evaluation and to use in assessment of a phenomenon under observation—certain criteria of comparison—are defined by GC ECE. This means that in practice a teacher compares the state of the phenomenon under observation (his/her findings) with GC ECE requirements, concludes whether and to what extent the situation is satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and decides how to proceed in light of these conclusions.

To specify the quality of provision of education more accurately, GC ECE uses the concept of risks. Risks identify phenomena posing a threat to the success of educational projects and diminishing the quality of the process of education and its results. Their presence is a sign of unsatisfactory quality of provided education.

Assessment of results of education in individual children. GC ECE brings some entirely new insights into the issues of assessment of quality of provision of education for children. The former focus on child's performance, its comparison and evaluation with respect to a specific norm has been replaced by continuous monitoring and assessment of individual progress achieved by children in the process of their education. The purpose of the assessment is not to compare children against one another and label them as successful or unsuccessful, but the assessment is a tool in the process of searching for optimum paths in education of individual children.

Regarding the criteria for evaluation of achieved educational results, GC ECE does specify certain outputs, referred to as expected results, but only for the stage at which the child finishes early childhood education. Even then, these criteria are very general and meant to be used as a benchmark only. It is to be borne in mind that each child attains different outputs at different times, in a different extent and a quality corresponding to his/her individual talents. This means that it is the optimum fulfillment of a child's educational potential and needs that is the indicator of the quality of educational results.

Good education is education in which the teacher stimulates the child adequately, noticing possible irregularities in his/her development at an early stage and providing him/her with adequate support and assistance. The teacher watches the child in natural and artificial situations continuously, observing developmental and learning progress purposefully, analyzes the results of these activities so as to find out about the child's needs and limits in order to be able to adjust the educational offerings accordingly. The assessment of the standard of educational results is not a one-time "survey" and state-of-the-art assessment, but a continuous process of feedback, whose results are continuously projected into further educational work of the teacher directed toward the child. Rather than levelling out children's performance forcibly, good early childhood education contributes to making the educational and life chances of individual children more even.

This approach to the development of quality of early childhood education provision and its assessment is an entirely new phenomenon in the Czech Republic, still awaiting an objective evaluation by all those involved: teachers, parents, and the general public.

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Kateřina Smolíková

Curriculum

Introduction

Currently, preschool institutional upbringing and education in the Czech Republic is a natural part of the system of education, and as such has a clearly formulated program of education, or curriculum. Curriculum formation has a rich tradition in Bohemia and Moravia, evidenced by the fact that the current curriculum has emerged from a dynamic process. A product of the Educational Act of 2004, the General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (*Rámcový vzdělávací program pro předškolní vzdělávání*), was adopted as the national curriculum of the Czech Republic.

Key Moments in Curriculum Formation

A look into the history of the early childhood curriculum and early public childhood education in the Czech Republic confirms that despite the fact that the development of Czech early childhood pedagogy has been influenced especially by both social processes and development of pedagogic thinking worldwide, there have been a number of attempts to develop an early childhood curriculum that is distinctively Czech in character.

The first integrated early childhood curriculum created in this country was *Informativium scholae maternae* by I. A. Comenius (1592–1670). This curriculum specifies educational objectives (harmonious personal development), the teaching content (body of knowledge concerning nature and society), as well as a way of communicating it to children (by play). Many of these ideas are still alive today and are of interest even for a modern early childhood curriculum.

Another period that proved important for further development of the Czech curriculum was at the turn of the eighteenth century, when institutions providing exclusively social care (nurseries, kindergartens, and infant schools for children of working mothers) gradually evolved into educational institutions. The first program of upbringing called *Kindergarten* (created for the purposes of a nursery founded in Prague in 1832) was a relatively sophisticated program of elementary education. It emphasized instruction in morals, learning about the surrounding

world, elements of writing and reading, and was supplemented with methodological guidelines and notes.

The development of the early childhood curriculum was regulated by *Educational Acts (1869, 1908)* at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. General rules for early childhood curricula, entirely distinct from the school curriculum, were formulated in the process. Nursery schools were charged with supporting and complementing family upbringing, preparing children for school and developing their physical, sensory, and psychic potential. Tools for educational work, namely play, occupation, light work, and observation were set also in legislation. The necessity to respect the needs of the child was stressed—methods of work used in school were prohibited explicitly. This trend later found support in a reformist pedagogical movement. What is worth stressing from that period is especially the *Program of Upbringing for Nursery Schools, 1927 (Výchovný program mateřských škol)*, an integrated and systematic treatise on early childhood education, written from the theoretical and practical, conceptual and methodological points of view.

The period that followed was characterized by—unfortunately unsuccessful—efforts to legitimize early childhood education as the first stage of the school system. The function of an early childhood curriculum was played by syllabi and work plans still based on the reformist concept of educational work.

The number of nursery schools increased dramatically in the post-World War II period, due to the increased rate of employment among mothers of young children. The formation of national guidelines started at this stage. The first of them was still under the influence of reformist pedagogical movement but subsequent guidelines abandoned these reformist efforts, concluding with the Integrated School Act, 1948, which included nursery schools in the system of education (although with a curriculum very school-like in character). From this point on the function of the early childhood curriculum was played by school syllabi, that is, compulsory, detailed, and ideologically oriented guidelines. Segmentation into individual educational categories (physical, cognitive, moral, aesthetic, and labor-related) appeared for the first time as a counterpart to school subjects. Educational requirements were specified for two age-groups and a firm structure of the day as well as forms of educational work were defined, with primary attention paid to preparation for instruction in the integrated school environment.

With time the situation changed again. The marked school-like orientation of the early childhood curriculum was somewhat attenuated in the 1960s, thanks among other things to efforts to consolidate educational processes from birth to the entry in school. This made the curriculum a matter of concern for the Ministry of Health along with the Ministry of Education, because it included crèches for infants and toddlers as well as nursery schools. Due to the integration of the medical point of view into this platform, the program gave greater emphasis to the natural development of the child and the attenuation of social norms, despite the ideas of the contemporary, integrated, and collectivist-oriented school. The second version of the *Program of Educational Work in Crèches and Nursery Schools, 1978* was a failed attempt at making compatible what was essentially incompatible: deepening ideological-educational activities while at the same time

respecting the age-related as well as individual needs of children sufficiently, and better preparing children for school.

Early Childhood Curriculum Development: The Current State of the Art

The period after November 1989 was characterized by a need to provide a new system for schools and education in the new political and social contexts. School reform preparation was launched. In line with new principles of curricular policy, formulated as part of the National Program of Development of Education in the Czech Republic, (the so-called White Book, 2001) and regulated by the Act for Early Childhood, Elementary, High School, Higher Vocational, and Other Education (2004), a new system of curricula was introduced into the system of education. The main objectives of the reform were to transform the educational environment by opening up educational offerings increasing the autonomy of individual schools and their teachers, and guaranteeing the quality of the education provided. The curricular documents were formulated *at two levels*—the nation and the school. The state level is represented by the National Curriculum (NC) and the General Curricula (GC). The NC formulates educational requirements pertaining to education as a whole, and the GC defines educational frameworks required for the individual stages (early childhood, elementary, and high school education). The school level is represented by the school curricula (SC) designed to provide guidelines for the process of education in individual schools. School curricula are formulated by individual schools in line with the principles set by the relevant GC.

This system of organization is especially significant for the early childhood curriculum because the new Educational Act appreciates the pedagogical importance of nursery schools and radically shifts the position of early childhood education within the system of education: early childhood education is regarded as an important part of lifelong education and is guaranteed and supported by the state in a variety of ways. There is a national early childhood curriculum (General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, or GC ECE). This curriculum sets a compulsory, but sufficiently wide framework for development of different pedagogical concepts and trends as well as for development of school curricula suited to the particular conditions of individual nursery schools.

A Brief Description of The Early Childhood Curriculum

The recently instituted childhood curriculum (GC ECE) in the Czech Republic is based on the following principles:

- acceptance of natural developmental specifics of preschool children and their systematic reflection in the content, forms, and methods of their education;
- preservation of room for individuality of personality in children and enabling development and education of each individual child compatible with their individual possibilities and needs;
- orientation to creation of a basis for lifelong learning and social self-fulfilment, focus on creation of foundations for key skills attainable within the early childhood education stage (i.e., not only with a view to preparation of the child for school);

- creation of room for individual profiles of individual nursery schools (allowing schools to take advantage of different forms and methods of education and adjust education to specific regional and local conditions, possibilities, and needs);
- guaranteeing comparable pedagogical efficacy of curricula developed and offered by individual nursery schools;
- defining quality of early childhood education from the point of view of objectives, conditions, content, and results of education in order to provide general criteria for internal and external evaluation of nursery schools and the education provided by them.

The curriculum reformulates the pedagogical goals and content of early childhood education as well as the conditions in which it takes place.

Goals of the Early Childhood Curriculum

The goals and objectives of the early childhood curriculum were set in line with the goals and objectives of the curricula for further stages of education, but at a level corresponding to the age of the children. The main objective is to develop each individual child in his/her physical, psychological, and social aspects and guide him/her so that by the end of the preschool period the child is a unique and relatively independent personality, competent to handle—actively and to his/her personal satisfaction—those situations he/she will commonly encounter (especially in familiar environments, i.e., in family and at school), as well as those situations to be faced in the future. The general goals set by the curriculum are the following:

- development of the child, learning and getting to understand,
- internalization of the fundamental values this society is based upon,
- acquisition of personal independence and the ability to act as an independent personality affecting one's environment.

The process of fulfillment of these goals is directed at formation of elements of key skills (concerning learning, problem solving and communication, social and personal, activity-oriented, and citizen skills) to be further developed and deepened in the following stages of education.

Methods and Forms of Early Childhood Education

Methods and forms of early childhood education, too, are adjusted to the developmental, physiological, cognitive, social, and emotional needs of children of this age (3–6 years). Early childhood education offers children an environment that is welcoming, stimulating, interesting, and rich in content, in which the child can feel confident, safe, joyful, and satisfied and which provides him/her with opportunities to act, enjoy himself/herself, and be occupied in ways natural to children. Education is consistently associated with needs and possibilities of individual children differing on an individual basis, including specific educational needs. Each child is provided with assistance and support to the extent that the particular child needs and in the quality he/she finds adequate. Early childhood education is organized so that children, regardless of age differences or different abilities and learning potential, can be educated in the same class.

Methods of experiential and cooperative learning through play and activity are applied in education of preschool children. Training activities are organized above all as free play in which children participate on the basis of their own interest and by their own choice, drawing on situations presenting the children with comprehensible practical examples of contexts encountered in life. The activities used are spontaneous or directed, interlinked with one another and balanced, and are organized usually in smaller groups or on an individual basis. The didactic style is based on the principles of education, individual choice, and active participation of the child. Education is organized in integrated blocks not differentiating between “educational domains” or “components,” but presenting the child with educational content in natural contexts, connections, and relations so that it is easier to understand for the child and the obtained experience can be used in practice.

Educational Content of Early Childhood Curriculum

The educational content of the early childhood curriculum is the main educational tool. It is formulated in a way suited to the integrated character of education and its activity-based nature. Consequently it is set only in general and applied to the whole age-group, that is, for children from 3 to 6 years of age. Formally speaking, the educational content is structured into five domains selected so that they respect the natural wholeness and development of the child’s personality as well as his/her gradual integration into living and social environment. These areas are titled in the curriculum as follows:

- The child and his/her body.
- The child and his/her psyche.
- The child and the other.
- The child and the society.
- The child and the world.

The individual educational domains are treated in the curriculum so as to be comprehensible to the teacher and so that he/she can further develop the content (i.e., use the domains as a basis for formulating suitable integrated blocks of the school curriculum). Each domain includes the following interrelated categories: component goals (objectives), educational offerings, and expected outputs or results. Component goals express what the teacher should consider in the process of early childhood education, what he/she should support in the child. Educational offerings represent a set of practical and intellectual activities and opportunities, leading to goal fulfillment and output attainment. Expected outputs are component outputs of education that can be regarded as generally attainable at this stage of education (they are not compulsory for the child) and are formulated as skills and competencies. The curriculum also specifies potential risks to be avoided as they may pose a threat to the success of educational objectives.

The curriculum also identifies the conditions within which early childhood education is to take place, in the areas of material equipment, lifestyle and diet, psychic hygiene, organization and management, human resources and pedagogic qualification, and parent involvement. It identifies the optimum standard (quality) of these conditions, whose full provision should gradually be approached.

Development of school curricula by individual schools presupposes application of self-evaluation activities in each nursery school, including monitoring and evaluation of individual educational achievements by individual children.

Support for Curriculum Implementation

Currently, supplementary methodological documents are developed and other development projects are pursued to support implementation of the new curriculum into the practice of nursery schools. This is done not only to facilitate for teachers the techniques for development of their own school curricula, but also to provide practical examples, ideas, and illustrations as a means of enhancing the possibility of success. The responses to this new curriculum for early childhood education by the pedagogical community in the Czech Republic have in general been very positive.

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Learning a Foreign Language as Part of Early Childhood Education

Learning (communicating in) a second language other than the mother tongue has always been regarded as one of the key skills (strengths) of a well-educated person in the Czech Republic. This requirement has recently been extended to all those undertaking compulsory education, and mastery of at least one foreign language has been considered a basic competence necessary for everyday life.

Foreign languages have been assigned more space in the school curricula. Within compulsory education one foreign language is taught starting in primary school and instruction in another one is defined as optional at the lower level of secondary education. Practice nevertheless indicates that the forms of teaching foreign languages used so far are not always efficient enough. One of the reasons is that foreign language teaching is started too late. As a number of studies in developmental psychology, social psychology, neuropsychology, psycholinguistics,

and other disciplines show, the ideal age for starting foreign language learning is early childhood.

Why Start Second Language Learning Early?

Justification for starting early is mainly as follows. Language is a system consisting of five subsystems: the phonological, the lexical, the morpho-syntactic or grammatical, the pragmatic, and the discursive one. They are integrated within the general language system, enabling its harmonious functioning. Each of these systems, nevertheless, has a certain degree of autonomy, attributable to the diversity of their developmental calendars. Two of them, the phonological and the grammatical subsystems, develop most profoundly in early childhood. The period of sensitivity to them therefore lasts from birth (or even earlier) to approximately six years of age. The end of this period for phonological aspects of language is at 8 or 9, or maybe even earlier—our current state of knowledge in this area does not allow us to establish the time frame more accurately. After this period, the child begins to perceive phonemes of a foreign language systematically on the background of the mother tongue. The chances of mastering a foreign language to perfection therefore decrease dramatically from this age on despite the fact that the child keeps maturing as far as different domains of cognitive development are concerned. Although for morpho-syntactic aspects the period of sensitivity ends as late as at 14–15 years of age, many studies suggest that the capacity of the central nervous system and the neurolinguistic apparatus for construction of basic grammar starts to gradually decrease as early as when the child has reached 5 or 6 years of age.

Competing Needs and Interests

Although learning foreign languages in early childhood is mostly regarded as highly appropriate and efficient, one must take into account that early childhood is a crucial period for the development of many other skills and competencies in all areas of development of the child's personality. One must therefore ask the question of whether it is really so important to devote time and effort to foreign language acquisition as opposed to other things at this age. Moreover, at the present time, typified by the development of media and information technologies, a growing percentage of children are showing signs of speech disorders due to a lack of natural high-quality face-to-face communication in their first language. It is mainly for this reason that the attitude of many experts on early childhood education toward foreign language learning in early childhood is reserved. There has been no unequivocal comprehensive view on this issue yet.

The Impact of Political Change

Arguments in support of early foreign language learning have only slowly been entering the awareness of experts as well as the general public and parents of preschool children in the Czech Republic. The political and social change in 1989 in the Czech Republic and the associated opening to the surrounding

world were followed by a growing awareness of the importance of the ability to communicate in foreign languages, both in professional and in personal life. Methods of foreign language teaching have become a field for modernization and efficiency improvement. Experience from western European countries became a starting point for a process in which foreign language teaching—to the satisfaction of parents—started to find its place within early childhood education.

Types of Foreign Language Learning

Types of foreign language learning in early childhood may be divided according to the criterion of whether the goal is to arrive at *bilingualism* or just a certain degree of *sensibility* to a particular foreign language. Definitions of bilingualism vary, from the one by Bloomfield defining a bilingual person as someone with “full competence in two languages” to the one by McNamara defining a bilingual person as someone “competent in a language other than the mother tongue in at least one of the following linguistic domains: comprehension, speaking, reading, writing.” Bilingualism can be further divided into ambilingualism, equilingualism, and semilingualism, or to dominant as opposed to balanced bilingualism. Both bilingualism and sensibility can, with a varying degree of success, be achieved both through education in the family and through educational institutions.

Bilingualism in the family is the most natural way of acquiring two languages by a child. By a bilingual family we understand a family commonly using two languages (with a certain frequency). The growing number of foreigners who settle down to live in the Czech Republic is accompanied by a growing number of bilingual marriages. Because the Czech Republic has been a markedly monolingual country, the phenomenon of bilingual upbringing of children in the family has largely been a new one. Experts, like the lay public, still have some misgivings as far as bilingual upbringing of children is concerned. Nevertheless, as many researches currently demonstrate, bilingual or multilingual education does not have the negative impacts assumed by the scientists of the 1950s. However, it is appropriate to adhere to some rules. Romaine proposes six configurations of **bilingual education**. The best known one is the Ronjat principle “one person, one language,” also known as the “Law of Grammont.” This principle can be recommended in a situation when a child’s family environment involves two parents whose mother tongues differ. It is based on the hypothesis that distinct language contexts enhance acquisition of bilingualism while mixed contexts tend to be a disturbing factor in this process of language acquisition. According to this principle, each parent should address the child in one language only, specifically his or her own first language. Bilingual upbringing of children is nevertheless attempted also by families whose first language is the same as the language of the environment the family lives in. It is advisable in this case that the foreign language is used by one parent only. This parent should be proficient in the language, and as close to bilingual as possible, especially in the phonological and grammatical aspects. Otherwise there is a risk that the child may acquire incorrect language structures, whose correction becomes difficult. It must nevertheless be borne in mind that the first language has an irreplaceable role in the general development of the child’s personality. The definition of “first language” may be

difficult in some ambiguous language contexts. One possibility is to define it as the language the child learns from his/her mother or the primary person taking care of him/her.

Bilingual Education in the Czech Republic

There are so-called bilingual nursery schools in the Czech Republic based (although it may be an unconscious choice in some cases) on the *immersion method* developed by the social psychologist Wallace Lambert in Canada in the 1970s, which try to simulate the situation of natural bilingualism. This method is proposed for the whole period of school attendance from nursery school to secondary school, the several first years being characterized by a total “immersion” of the children in the foreign language. This method expanded into a number of Canadian and North American schools very quickly. In the European context it was introduced as an experiment in the nursery school of the Léonie de Waha Coeducation Lycée in Lutych in 1989 in response to the incentive of the Association for Foreign Language Learning by the Immersion Method, and especially its founder Jacques Heynen.

When speaking of the immersion method, or other forms of foreign language learning in early childhood in general, a question arises regarding whether the child’s knowledge of the first language deteriorates when the language is not used to the same extent as by his/ her peers living in a monolingual environment. Research dealing with this topic nevertheless shows that inclusion of a foreign language into the school curriculum does not delay the natural process of learning the first language in any way. Some studies conclude, moreover, that teaching by the immersion method may even be beneficial to progress in the first language to some extent, especially in terms of vocabulary. Also results recorded in classes of the nursery school of Léonie de Waha Lycée in Lutych confirm the hypotheses that the immersion method is harmless with respect to the first language.

Bilingual nursery schools in the Czech Republic are mostly private. Foreign language instruction is in most cases provided by Czech teachers who are highly proficient in the foreign language while their pedagogical qualification is not a necessary requirement. The ideal situation in which the teacher is a native speaker with pedagogical qualification is rare. The tuition fees in bilingual nursery schools are usually relatively high and therefore there is a great concentration of children from high-income families in these schools.

Foreign Language Teaching Pedagogy

Teaching whose goal is development of a sensibility to the particular foreign language takes place in nursery schools, language centres or schools, or other educational institutions or directly in the family environment where the teachers are the parents themselves. For class instruction the recommendation is to teach groups of five to six, but not more than ten children for ten to twenty minutes. Children should be taught every day in an ideal case or they should at least have an opportunity to revisit what they already have learned every day. The

main principles for familiarizing children with a foreign language published in literature designed for Czech nursery school teachers are the following:

- To use comprehensible language,
- to speak slowly,
- to use short sentences and phrases,
- to avoid using abstract words while using pictures or distinct gestures with clear meanings,
- to maintain short breaks after every sentence or phrase,
- to come up with “clean and clear” demonstrations so that children can repeat them as accurately as possible, to show the reaction the teacher expects,
- to repeat and explain as many times as necessary,
- to check whether the child has understood what the teacher wanted to say,
- to arrange questions from the easiest ones to which children can answer “yes” or “no” to more difficult ones where the child chooses between two alternatives, to the most difficult ones with several alternative answers for which pictures or aids should be used in the beginning.

It is essential not to cheat the child of his/her first language. Therefore if he/she feels the need to speak it, the teacher should not prevent him/her from using it. When teaching children a foreign language the teacher should adhere to the principle that things should not be overdone and should return to previously introduced vocabulary and use it as a starting point. It is also recommended to tell children of the life and institutions of the country whose language they are learning, to teach them to respect the culture of another country and to have tolerance toward foreigners. This is where foreign language learning gradually merges with the multicultural education so needed in the traditionally monocultural and monolingual Czech environment.

Although the centralized curriculum for early childhood education (General Curriculum for Early Childhood Education) does not include instruction in foreign languages, a great many nursery schools in the Czech Republic currently offer optional foreign language instruction (mostly English, but German in some regions near the borders) in response to a demand on the part of parents, usually one or two lessons per week. Due to the lack of foreign language teachers even at higher levels of school these classes are often taught by persons without the necessary linguistic and pedagogical qualifications. They are mostly qualified teachers who, however, do not know the foreign language well enough, or teachers who know the foreign language well but do not have the pedagogical qualification. This problem has to do with the fact that most of the teachers currently employed finished their studies before 1989, when foreign language teaching (apart from teaching Russian) was a rather marginal affair. We may nevertheless predict a significant improvement in this area, to go hand in hand with an increasing language competence of the Czech population.

It may be said in general that the lay population in the Czech Republic is currently in favour of teaching foreign languages in early childhood, quite contrary to the opinion of many experts who regard it as a factor contributing to the growing number of speech problems in children. It is, however, evident that the whole business of foreign language learning in early childhood is very new in the Czech Republic and may be expected to receive more attention in the future.

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Lucie Kozáková and Milada Rabušicová

Teacher Education in the Czech Republic

Historical Background

Although early childhood pedagogy is one of the youngest among teaching professions, it has a history of dynamic development, characterized by efforts for professional quality and specialization.

In the Czech context, as in other European nations, the first public educational institutions for early childhood education started to emerge in the 1830s in the form of nurseries, sanctuaries, and kindergartens. These settings were designed for children aged 2 and up, who required care while their mothers were away from home for work. There was no special training for childminders working in these institutions. The children were cared for by experienced women, selected in line with contemporary criteria of civil integrity.

The dominating social-charitable focus of these institutions was altered by the Prague nursery founded in 1832, where a qualified male elementary school teacher was employed in order to prioritize the educational function over the nursing function of preschools. The institution also served as a centre for preparation and education of male teachers for work in other nurseries. This marked the beginnings of the approach to early childhood education as qualified work, requiring formal training.

The subsequent development of social-charitable public institutions for early childhood education, characterized by considerable numbers of children per group, led to the development of a staff position known as “lady minder.” Her crucial role involved being a kind and helpful person to stand in for the mother, providing the child with necessary care, and helping the child to acquire good manners. Starting in 1868 only single women were allowed to work in nursery schools, and this emphasis on unmarried teachers lasted until 1919.

The Imperial Act of 1868 defined nursery schools as educational institutions. This act called for teacher qualification specialization, and the Statute of Training Colleges was subsequently issued to serve as a conceptual basis for theoretical and practical instruction at one-year (later two-year) training colleges. Graduates of these courses were referred to as nursery school teachers from 1934 onward.

Two theoretical camps began to form, with differing views on the role of early childhood teachers and the training that they should receive. One group

viewed the early childhood educator in a classic teacher role, and aimed to integrate professional training for teachers of the preelementary and elementary stages. The other group prioritized simple practical training focused on nursing care, thus reflecting the status of the early childhood educator as nurse childminder. This dilemma had legal and occupation-statutory consequences, which have been reflected in professional training of teachers during the twentieth century.

Starting Points for Occupational Transformation

In the first half of the twentieth century, the nursing (care) approach to early childhood education still prevailed. The low occupational and social status of the nursing profession became a subject of criticism by employees of early childhood education institutions. Together with elementary school teachers, they requested the opportunity to improve their occupational qualifications through university education. Although their request was not recognized by legislation, nursery school teachers organized remarkable self-help educational activities (they, for example, organized university courses, established a resource and record-keeping centre, implemented research projects in experimental schools in collation with experts, published books, and journals). These spontaneous self-educatory activities were interrupted by World War II, after which they were not fully resumed.

Occupational training of nursery school teachers shifted to the university level with the creation of pedagogical faculties in 1946. Nursery school teachers trained together with teachers of other stages of education between 1948 and 1950.

The year 1948 was marked by a radical political and social turn in what was then Czechoslovakia, resulting (among other things) in increased political pressure calling for a broad engagement of women in the labor market. This pressure led to an increased demand for early childhood institutions such as crèches and nursery schools, as well as for adequate human resources. Crèches were established for children between 3 months (six months later) and 3 years of age. These institutions, largely with round-the-clock operation, were run by the Ministry of Health. Child care was delegated to children's nurses, who trained at medical (high) schools, which marked the beginning of the medical accent in care of the youngest children that has later been criticized.

During this time, pedagogical faculties failed to produce enough teachers for nursery (as well as primary) schools. Occupational training for these two types of teachers was subsequently demoted to the level of a four-year high school in 1950. While training of primary school teachers soon returned to the university level, high school training of nursery school teachers still remained, and was the basic type of their occupational training until the mid-1990s.

In 1970, the preparation of a dual system of nursery school teachers' training was launched. This system involved a choice between training at specialized high schools, concluding in a standard graduation exam (higher secondary level of education, ISCED 3) or training at the tertiary level (ISCED 5). Most teachers in training elected the former option, while the latter tended to be viewed as training for potential nursery school headmasters.

Perspectives on Staff Training Programs

The social situation after 1989 has brought new challenges in training in early childhood pedagogy. The dominant belief that attendance at an early childhood education institution is an important investment for life and lifelong learning has increased requirements for occupational training of this staff rather dramatically.

Programs for infants and toddlers. Childminders in crèches represent a special category of qualified staff for the youngest children; they are referred to not as “teachers”, but “nurses.” This is because the model of their training has remained unchanged since the socialist era: they study at high schools with medical specialization. Crèches, the settings for which they train, remain under the surveillance of the Ministry of Health. The contemporary emphasis on the importance of the family and individualized care of the youngest children, together with the legal right to a 36-month maternity leave, has decreased the need for public educational institutions for children below the age of 3. Crèches served about 20 percent of the under 3 population prior to 1989. Since then, the rate has dropped to less than 1 percent today. Along with the decline in the number of crèches, the care of children under 3 is characterized by private efforts and contracted services, which are not subjected to public control or regulated by requirements for licensed occupational services. Their distribution tends to be marginal.

Teacher training programs. There are currently three paths to the nursery teacher occupation. A general shift to the tertiary level of training and conceptual relatedness between training of nursery school and primary school teachers, who have trained at the tertiary level since the beginning of the 1950s, is envisioned for the future.

Legal unification of requirements for training in early childhood pedagogy (Teacher Training Standards), specification of content-level requirements and skills (the National Curriculum), and a general increase in the occupational status of nursery school teachers (requirement for full occupational training at national and accredited institutions and wage equalization with other teacher categories) are expected to take place.

High School Specialization

High school education with specialization has been the prevailing qualification attained by 95 percent of nursery school teachers. Graduates of these programs pursue work mainly as nursery school teachers, preceptors in schools and other educational institutions (after-school centres, school clubs, centres organizing leisure-time activities for children, children’s homes), or in welfare centres for children with special needs.

There are currently seventeen high schools with pedagogical specialization in the Czech Republic. The program of studies is designed for students who have completed nine years of compulsory school attendance. Enrollment is contingent upon passing entrance exams in the student’s first language successfully, a personal character evaluation, and demonstrating talents in music, sports, and the

arts. The course of study lasts for four years, and graduates receive a certificate of full high school education with specialization. The degree is completed with a satisfactory score on a standardized exam (level 3A according to international standard classification ISCED).

Vocational School Training

An amendment to the 1995 Educational Act has enriched the portfolio of nursery school training to include studies at higher vocational schools. There are currently twenty-one state-run higher vocational schools with specialization in pedagogy and teaching, six of which include specialization in early childhood pedagogy. Graduates of these programs are generally seen as overqualified to be nursery school teachers, and frequently pursue a broader—in terms of both age and domains—spectrum of activities organized for children and the young.

In order to enroll in the vocational programs, a student must have completed a full high school education (general or with specialization) and received a passing grade on the graduation exam. Applicants must prove their personality qualifications and talents in aesthetic disciplines. Students graduating from the vocational school receive a graduation certificate at level 5B according to international classification ISCED.

University Training of Nursery School Teachers

There are currently seven state universities offering programs with specialization in pedagogy in the Czech Republic. These institutions organize three-year bachelor study programs referred to as “Pedagogy for Nursery Schools”. These programs may include intramural, combined, or extramural studies. The first program to receive accreditation was launched in 1993 at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Charles University in Prague. Students must have passed the high school graduation exam in order to enroll in this program.

The university program of studies includes general and specialized training, as well as intensive theoretical and practical training for early childhood educators. This program is in accordance with European standards in early childhood pedagogy (ISCED 5).

University studies are concluded with a state bachelor examination consisting of a defence of a bachelor thesis and an oral exam. The graduates are granted the academic title “Bachelor” (abbreviated as “Bc”).

Occupational skills obtained by a graduate of this program include the following:

- respect the personality of the child, develop it, and be able to create an atmosphere of trust, safety, and understanding for the children;
- identify specific characteristics of individual children and make these a basis for one’s educational activities;
- structure activities based on the needs and skills of preschool children;
- choose adequate methods with respect to the particular conditions and the developmental level of the children, select pedagogical processes correctly, analyze and justify one’s decisions;

- plan one's activities and create conditions for the development of the individual and the group, including children with specific needs;
- be proficient in basic musical, artistic, and dramatic activities appropriate to early childhood and use one's talents in these areas.

Graduate Studies

A more advanced training in theory and methodology of early childhood pedagogy can be obtained in the program of studies "Early Childhood Pedagogy," also organized by the Faculty of Pedagogy at Charles University in Prague. The program is organized to combine the intramural and extramural form and lasts for ten semesters. It is concluded by a state examination consisting of a defence of a diploma thesis and an oral examination. Graduates are granted the academic title "Magister" (Master) abbreviated as "Mgr."

Within the program of studies, occupational skills are extended by analysis of theoretical problems from the domain of early childhood pedagogy, reflection and generalization of pedagogical experience, training in empirical research methods, and presentation of research results.

Future Possibilities and Social Repercussions

A program of two-level training in early childhood pedagogy consisting of coordinated successive bachelor and graduate studies is currently being developed. The bachelor studies portion of this program is regarded as a general compulsory qualification for nursery school teachers, while the second, graduate level should involve a more advanced theoretical understanding and occupational specialization.

Occupational training within the nursery school teacher specialization is currently available to both women and men. It has not always been so. Until the mid-1990's, only women were admitted to the high school specialization programs. The existing percentage of male teachers in nursery schools remains close to zero.

The occupational and social status of a nursery school teacher is comparable with that of primary school teachers, although wages are lower. The average monthly wage of a nursery school teacher in the Czech Republic in 2004 was CZK 16,146 while the average wage of an elementary school teacher was CZK 20,227. These wages are comparable to those of other professions, as the average wage in the Czech Republic lies somewhere between 18,000 and 20,000 CZK (roughly \$800-\$1,000 USD).

Nursery school teachers are relatively in demand in the market. However, demographic trends signal a decline in birthrates in the future, which is likely to result in decreasing numbers of children in nursery schools.

Nursery school teachers currently represent the second-most numerous teacher category in the Czech Republic, working with over 90 percent of the population of preschool children attending nursery schools. The importance of high-quality training for a demanding job is no longer in doubt and is generally recognized.

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Eva Opravilová

Child Care for Children from 0 to 3

Child care for children from birth to three years of age is a topic involving a great variety of possible viewpoints and approaches. The most common approach considers the youngest children in terms of their medical safety and psychological development, including cognitive and social development. To be able to do this, we need to understand the optimum conditions and environment for this development.

Background

Traditionally, the family has been responsible for creating favourable conditions for child development, and has been regarded as the most appropriate “instrument” for fostering this development. Historically, in both the Czech and the wider European cultural spheres, this approach was advanced by the well-known pedagogical treatise *Informatorium scholae maternae* written by John Amos **Comenius** in 1632. This document contains advice and recommendations to mothers taking care of their infants and toddlers.

As the traditional society transformed into a modern one, new approaches and arguments considering a broader social, economic, and cultural context started to emerge. In the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries there was a boom in institutions providing early childhood education in the Czech Republic. These institutions were almost exclusively nursery schools catering to children ranging from 3 to 6 years of age. However, the period of the communist regime in the late 1940s brought a huge expansion of public care institutions (crèches), first for children above 3 months of age and then for those 6 months to 3 years of age. The main reason for this expansion was that during the communist period, child care was primarily used as a tool for obtaining a new labor force. This was especially evident in the 1950s when the government initiated a policy of intensive female employment. During this initiative, the preference was to build collective crèches, which were governmental and state enterprises

that at one point served some 20 percent of children of preschool age. This trend continued in the following decades. The government controlled the accessibility, quality, and even the pedagogical programs in these institutions.

Immediately following the political change at the end of the 1980s, the number of crèches was dramatically reduced. The reason for this reduction was the argument that children under 3 feel best with their families. This argument was provoked especially by the negative experience of previous generations of Czech children and parents, who remember crèches as one of the worst oppressions of the communist regime. A saying from those times goes: "Old people's homes are children's revenge to parents for crèches."

Child Care for Infants and Toddlers

Currently, child care for the youngest children in the Czech Republic is a highly controversial topic, reflecting both the unhappy experience from the recent "socialist" past and the new up-to-date requirements attributable to the acceptance of the Czech Republic into the European Union (in 2004). The main arguments in general for extending institutional child care for children from birth to three years of age include participation of women in the labor market, equal opportunities for women and men in terms of their personal development, support to families in a broader sense of the word, and enhancement of the birthrate. These arguments have also started to gain weight in the Czech Republic.

At the same time, the strong traditional argument emphasizing the importance of a close bond between the mother and the child still exists. This argument has shifted public opinion away from institutionalized child care, in support of an arrangement of care within which the child grows up in the family, cared for by the mother, usually until the child is at least 3 years old.

Policy Initiatives

At present, Czech social policy in relation to the youngest children and their families seeks to find links between the interests of the children and parents, especially mothers. Policymakers are trying to approach the new philosophical and political bases of the social and family policy in the Czech Republic. As can be expected, this rather discrete discussion involves some strongly differing attitudes, depending on the political orientation of their advocates.

Briefly, the three main strategies of social policy in relation to the family are as follows:

1. *Market-oriented strategy*: Accentuates the role of the market, while provisions for families are minimized. In this strategy, the state helps to find solutions for only extreme cases. The family is perceived resulting from how people arrange their lives. As a result, this strategy emphasizes the need for a variety of available options.
2. *General support to families*: Emphasis is on marriage, cohesiveness of the family, and education of children within the family, particularly by means of child benefits and tax allowances related to the absence of mothers' economic activities, and

by means of public institutions such as nursery schools providing day care for children.

3. *Support for double incomes:* Aims at equality of opportunities for men and women in the labor market, enabling men to share the duties related to upbringing of children with women. In particular, this approach emphasizes public care and education, by means of public day care or residential care, emphasizing a rich and long parental leave.

The current policy in the Czech Republic seems to be a combination of the first two strategies. Especially in the beginning of the 1990s, a tendency towards a market-oriented type of family policy (at least supporting the argument in favour of everyone's personal responsibility for themselves, and in the system of family benefits) was noticeable. Alongside this, elements of the traditional model of general support to families became evident: a maternity grant increase, extension of the period of eligibility of parental allowances from 3 to 4 years of age (maternity plus parental leave) aimed at providing women (or men, with children aged 6 months and more) the opportunity to leave the labor market for a relatively long time. According to surveys of public opinion (ISSP), the Czech population prefers this traditional model, which is obviously one of the reasons for the low demand for crèches. Besides, Czechs prefer a traditional division of roles in the family duties and responsibilities. They see the woman's role, first of all, as that of giving birth.

Reduction of Crèches

The number of public institutions providing child care for children up to 3 years of age (crèches) was reduced drastically at the beginning of 1990s. This social change was followed by a radical ideological shift away from public child care. Many families found the idea of public child care for children from birth to three years of age undesirable. Instead of institutional child care, the traditional concept, based on the idea that "a child feels best home with his/her mother," was embraced and crèches closed down in huge numbers. Diminishing parental demand for crèches, combined with a drop in the birthrate, has led to the beleaguered state of public services for children of 0–3 years of age. The government has drastically reduced its monetary support of such institutions. In fact, the organized day-care system for very young children has disappeared. What was once a child-care system supported by crèches is gone, leaving only a few centers from the previous regime, administered by the Ministry of Health. The physical premises of former crèches have been sold or rebuilt to be used for other purposes. At present there are a total of fifty-eight crèches in the country, with a capacity of 1,674 children. To illustrate the change, there are now only three crèches in Brno, a city with a population of 450,000 which contained 115 such settings in the 1980s. In the rest of the South Moravia region (Brno being its centre), there are currently no crèches at all.

Some nongovernmental (private) initiatives are emerging, aimed at providing parents (mothers) immediate assistance if they need respite from their children for a particular period of time. Private care (by female students or seniors) is also

expanding. Yet both these options are expensive and many people doubt the quality of such services. In addition to this, there are services by civic associations or churches focused on the care of mother and child, such as centers where they can spend time together (mother's clubs).

In contrast to this reduction in crèches is very generous maternity and parental support, consisting of a parental leave of twenty-eight weeks, 69 percent of the previous salary, plus a four-year-leave at a flat rate (until the child's fourth birthday).

Financing

Crèches are administered by the Ministry of Health. They are established by the Municipalities (regional administration), through which they are subsidized. Yet their operation is expensive (at some CZK 7,500 monthly), resulting in the fact that parents must contribute approximately 13 percent to 19 percent toward the costs (CZK 1,200 to 1,500; between 50 and 65 USD per month). So the service is not cheap, although the fee is adjusted to family income. A new bill has been drafted that proposes making crèches private enterprises instead of being regarded as health care institutions.

Accessibility and Quality

Even though the number of crèches in the Czech Republic has reached an all-time low, their availability still exceeds their demand. For instance, the three above-mentioned crèches in Brno can serve 100 children but are only used to 60 or 70 percent of their capacity. This demonstrates that even such a small supply exceeds the demand. On top of that, the crèches are used mostly by lower income parents.

The main argument of the opponents of public care for the youngest children is the low quality of crèches. Those in the generation brought up in communist crèches have expressed their discontent with the quality of care, and their experiences are quite sad—nurses dressed in white, and hygiene standards given much more importance than a creative environment for children. The focus was on care, not on development. Such opinions still prevail in the general public and among politicians. Unfortunately, the structure of the current (public) crèches still gives this impression, although some improvements are evident. Nurses who work in crèches typically attend four-year secondary schools of nursing. Pedagogy and psychology are part of their curricula.

Research Findings and Conclusions

The previous paragraphs provide the basic facts concerning child care for children from 0 to 3 years of age in the Czech Republic, and the corresponding political background and interpretations. What is needed at this point is research-based empirical evidence regarding the benefits and risks of each particular alternative for the development of the child. Systematic research in this area has been absent. However, there are isolated research projects that provide some useful

information, and relevant research in other areas. Some conclusions on the quality and conditions of child care for the youngest children can be inferred from this information. In summary, the following facts are evident regarding the current situation in child care for children from 0 to 3 in the Czech Republic, placed in a broader context:

- There is a decreasing birthrate (currently 1.17), which may be a cause or could be a consequence of the present child-care situation;
- Mothers are getting older (more frequently giving birth in their thirties), which means fulfillment of the “biological role.” Mothers more often want to take care of their “ardently desired” child at home;
- The public has a generally negative attitude, resulting in a low demand for crèches;
- The quality of the care is usually regarded as low or not corresponding to the modern state of knowledge on the development of young children;
- Crèches are health care institutions, which implies that their priorities are hygiene, health, surveillance, and good food;
- There are no alternatives to crèches from which to choose;
- Crèches are costly, the government has cut the subsidy so that parents must contribute;
- The prolonged parental leave is also of importance;
- Finally, under pressure from the authorities, some kindergartens accept children aged 2 (although this seems to be the case in some regions only).

What is the consequence to young families? Families themselves have to care of their children in the long term, very much so through jobs available in the labor market. The society would only intervene if poverty becomes a serious issue, but even then this help would be rather limited. Women can stay out of the labor market for a relatively long period of time and devote themselves to the care of their children, and marriage is seen as advantageous. No significant support with housing or in the compensation of expenses related to upbringing can be expected.

What is needed, however, and what state policy and legislation in affairs of the society, the family, and employment should contribute, is to create conditions for families in which parents, and especially women, are able to make carefully considered choices, based on individual and family priorities. Currently there are no such choices or options regarding child care for children under the age of 3 in the Czech Republic.

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France

Early Childhood Education in France

Introduction

In France, compulsory school begins at age 6. In this centralized country there are national guidelines aimed at insuring the equity of early childhood policies. Care and education are implemented separately, by local authorities (regions, *departements*, municipalities). Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education there is a strong public investment in the education sector, which provides one unique and universal provision: the *école maternelle*. The care sector for children under 3 and for leisure time outside school is provided under the auspices of the Ministries of Social Affairs, Health, Youth and Sports. Various kinds of services are provided to these two age-groups.

The École Maternelle for 2- to 6-Year-Olds

The first *écoles maternelles* were charity institutions created during the nineteenth century to allow women to work in factories and to protect young children of these poor families. Their number increased quickly within the public system of education when the first laws of the French Republic defined, in 1881, *école maternelle* for the 2- to 6-year-olds as voluntary, free, and nonconfessional. The status and working conditions of the preschool teachers were aligned with those of elementary teachers in 1921. Since 1945, the increasing number of children from more advantaged backgrounds largely influenced the educational models, emphasizing progressively creativity and self-expression. During the 1970s, new national orientations included two main goals: socialization and learning, and, little by little, the *école maternelle* came to be valued as the first step toward school success.

Main characteristics. Nowadays, almost 100 percent of the children over 3 years of age and about 35 percent of 2-year-olds attend *écoles maternelles*. These free

public institutions (12% are private) are organized like elementary schools: similar hours (8:30–11:30 AM; 1:30–4:30 PM) and holidays, similar separation into groups of about twenty-five children by age, and located in the same group of buildings. Curriculum, teachers' salaries, training, and evaluation are the responsibility of the National Ministry of Education, but buildings, furniture, materials and assistants' salaries, training, and evaluation are the responsibility of local municipalities. At present the preschool teachers have the same training and job title, *professeuse des écoles*, whether they are working in *écoles maternelles* or in elementary schools. Their salaries are the same as *professeurs* of secondary education. By contrast, teaching assistants are required to hold only a one-year certificate in early childhood, and their salaries are very low.

Current policy for *École maternelle*. In 1989, the Law of Education specified that primary school must include both *école maternelle* and elementary school. *École maternelle* constituted cycle 1 (cycle of “early learning”) for the 2- to 5-year-olds. Continuity with the elementary school was emphasized at the beginning of cycle 2 (cycle of “basic learning”) by having the last year of *école maternelle* linked with the two first grades of the elementary school. The Law defined the right of access for all 3-year-olds, and gave priority to 2-year-olds living in high-need education areas (ZEP). Parents were officially recognized as members of the education community. In 1995, a curriculum for the *école maternelle* was published, to be included in the curriculum for primary school, which reaffirming republican ideals emphasized early learning within five domains. In 2002 the new curriculum reaffirmed this focus, and an absolute priority was given to mastering the French language.

Implementation. With the exception of some fruitful local experiences, teachers have resisted this new pedagogical reform that requires particularly strong teamwork and the development of new practices. At the present time we are seeing an “elementarisation” of *école maternelle*. The parental participation remains relatively weak in the field, as well as the inclusion of handicapped children.

Although middle-class families express a strong desire for early schooling for their 2-year-olds, this is controversial: children are too young or the *école maternelle* is unsuited to caring for their emotional needs / supporting children's early competencies. Emphasizing equality or calling for transformations of preschool practices to accommodate younger children is important. Studies indicate that participation by 2-year-olds results in some reduction, but not a complete removal of social inequalities. In high-priority zones (ZEP) 45 percent of 2-year-olds attend *école maternelle*. Better results at age 12 are observed in ZEP with the highest rate of early schooling (60% and more): early schooling is considered as one of the effective means developed in ZEP.

Child Care for the Under Threes

A very old practice of nonmaternal child rearing in the countryside explains the strong tradition of childminders in France. The first centers for very young children, called *crèches*, appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century, but

unlike the *écoles maternelles*, they remained without official recognition for many years. As a result, their number grew slowly, providing very inferior conditions of care to the poor children who attended them. In 1945, personnel from the hospital sector replaced the existing staffs in order to reduce child mortality. A negative view of the *crèche* persisted until the late 1960s, when the arrival of both new professionals (early childhood educators and psychologists) and parents of the “1968 generation” led to a new outlook. Crèches became more attractive to middle-class parents in a period when more mothers’ participation in the labor force was on the rise and while a growing concern for emotional security, autonomy, and creativity developed within the new staff training program.

Main characteristics. The French care policy is aiming the parent’s free choice between different settings. The Ministries of Social Affairs and Health develop the regulations and, with the national family allowance fund (CNAF), define the goals and resources of the regional family allowance funds (CAFs) which carry out, in each *département*, the policy decisions. Currently, care provision remains insufficient for children under age 3.

After the maternity leave (sixteen weeks paid and job protected) and the paternal leave (eleven days), half of the children under 3, and particularly those from modest backgrounds, stay at home. Some of these children, however, attend part-time provisions (*haltes-garderies*) or free centers for children and parents (*accueils parents-enfants*) run by municipalities or nonprofit associations. Most of these parents receive a parental leave allowance.

The remaining children are cared for in various settings that are heavily financed by public authorities. Parents have to contribute financially and are helped by allowances and tax reductions, including upper-class families who hire an in-home caregiver (1% of the under threes).

Many of the under threes (20%) are cared for by licensed childminders in the homes of those caregivers (three children authorized). The majority of them are employed by parents. These independent childminders may attend a network of childminders generally coordinated by an early childhood educator. Some others are employed by community family centers. Salaries are regulated by law at a rate of 2.25 times the national minimum wage per child per day.

Other children (10%) attend a *crèche* (for infants and toddlers), run mostly by municipalities but also by nonprofit organizations, parent cooperatives, or public companies, and very recently by the private sector. These centers are open all day and operate year-round. The head is generally a pediatric nurse; the staff includes a majority of pediatric nurse assistants and some early childhood educators, plus part-time pediatricians (compulsory) and psychologists (not compulsory). Salaries vary greatly according to the different categories of professionals. The ratio in crèches is one adult for every five babies, and one adult for every eight children who are able to walk.

About 10 percent of under threes, mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, are cared for by grandparents or by nonlicensed childminders (illegal in France), without any public financial assistance.

Current policy. A comprehensive national policy was designed in the early 1980s to improve the quantity and quality of these programs, and to encourage decentralization. Thanks to early childhood contracts between the regional family allowance funds (CAF) and the municipalities, the number of crèches doubled and of *haltes-garderies* tripled. In order to reduce the isolation of both mothers and childminders (and more recently in-home caregivers), innovative forms of care developed: first parent-child centers and then childminder networks, providing these adults with social support opportunities and children with group activities. During the 1990s “multicare” services (including several kinds of arrangements) developed as a response to parents’ increasing irregular work schedules and atypical working hours. The aim of these early childhood contracts is to increase quality by supporting in-service training, financing cultural projects, and recruiting municipal early childhood coordinators.

In 2000, a decree on collective care services updated and harmonized requirements: at least half of the personnel are required to have a diploma of pediatric nurse, early childhood educator, or pediatric nurse assistant; a quarter need to have qualifications related to health or social work; and a last quarter is exempted from any qualification. Paramedical professionals remain the majority but early childhood educators are now authorized to be heads of small *crèches* (less than forty places).

Curriculum. There is no curriculum in this sector, but the 2000 decree recognizes the educational role of these services in terms of well-being and development. No concrete content about play and “awaking” activities are specified but a pedagogical plan is required, as well as individualized plans for handicapped children and a social plan, aimed at parental participation and support, as well as prevention of social exclusion.

Implementation. Despite France’s policy of neutrality toward the type of child care chosen by parents and a positive evolution of the early childhood education (ECE) system during these last decades, real choice is highly limited both by local provision and financial constraints, particularly for families of modest means and living in rural areas. Crèches concentrate, in fact, in the Parisian area and big cities, and childminders remain too expensive for low-income families.

Except in the case of the cooperation between families and professionals existing within parents cooperatives, child-care staff are not involved in a real partnership with families, despite an important focus on welcoming parents and supporting parental competencies (“parentality”). These professionals are now calling for better training in how to work with parents, and particularly with those in social difficulties.

Leisure Time Services for After-School-Hours

The first leisure time services, called *patronages*, were created simultaneously with the republican school; nonprofit associations began to run these programs

at the beginning of the twentieth century, and municipalities took over in the 1950s. This sector has been regulated since the 1970s.

Main characteristics. Preschool children generally eat at the *école maternelle* (between 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM) and some of them also attend out-of-school-time services (before 8:30 AM or after 4:30 PM). Lunch time and out-of-school-time services are run by municipalities or not-profit associations, staffed by *animateurs* (low salaried) and a director qualified in out-of-school activities.

These very inexpensive services are regulated by Ministries of Health, Social Affairs, Youth and Sports. They are attended by children from all backgrounds, and particularly by lower income and poor families.

Recent legislation stresses the educational dimension of these services, which are to be approved by the child and maternal health services and have to develop educational projects. Thanks to local educational contracts between municipalities and local partners, leisure time services now are developing various cultural and sports activities, particularly in disadvantaged zones. Research on leisure time services is very recent. Further documentation is needed.

Conclusion

Despite the separation between the education and care sectors within ECE, a number of innovative projects and experiments are striving to improve access, quality, and equity for parents and children, offering interesting perspectives for the future. Based on teamwork and partnerships with other professionals, they enrich the children's experiences and increase the professionalism of early childhood personnel. Teachers transcend their didactic perspectives and become more aware of the children's learning processes, and medical orientations decrease among care professionals as leisure time teams begin to reinforce educational perspectives. Examples include the following:

- cooperation between teachers, assistants, and early childhood educators in *classes-passerelles* ("bridge-classes"), which aim to connect families and schools by enrolling 2-year-olds cared for at home and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- cooperation between professionals from the health, social welfare, and school sectors in centers for children and their parents, which also aim to facilitate the transition to *école maternelle* (in addition to supporting parental competencies and social links in disadvantaged areas);
- cooperation between early childhood staffs and culture professionals (artists, librarians, etc.) within various cultural projects, sometimes linking the care and education sectors, and stimulated by the Ministry of Culture with the aim of democratizing French culture and preventing social exclusion.

But the development of a "common culture" of early childhood needs, in fact, a stronger policy in order to go beyond the traditional cleavage between the different sectors. Will the recent creation of departmental early childhood commissions (not yet implemented in all *departments*), which include representatives of all sectors, contribute to this change?

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Sylvie Rayna

Culture, Race, and Ethnicity

Issues of culture, race, and ethnicity are different in every country. The notions of diversity, **immigration**, citizenship, nation, and public services education are linked to one another and must be examined when considering the issue of multiculturalism. This discussion begins with a short history of the French context and values, followed by a description of the role played by early childhood settings in France's strategy of integration. Next comes a presentation of some cultural projects and policies in early childhood, including their goals of democratization of culture throughout these early interventions. Also highlighted is the prevention of children's school failure and reduction of social exclusion, including content and strategies, and effects on children, families, and professionals. The entry concludes with a discussion of other initiatives.

The French Context

The issue of immigration. As in other countries, early childhood services are partly for young children of parents who have come from other countries. For many families, these services are the first time in which they meet the public culture of their new country. Most immigrant children are born in France and become French citizens when they reach adulthood because the French laws of naturalization consider anyone born and living in France to be a French citizen.

Immigration has a long and important history in France. France's immigration can be linked to its colonial past, with high rates during the 1970s and 1980s and a current flow of illegal immigrants (the borders are now officially closed). Following an older wave of immigrants from Italy, Poland, Spain, and Portugal, immigration shifted to North Africa and Black Africa, Turkey, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Immigrants represent about 11 percent of the French population (not including those born elsewhere but having French citizenship), and are overrepresented among disadvantaged families living in the neighborhoods of big cities.

The issue of ethnicity. In France one does not use the notion of ethnic minorities. Communities created around a common origin, religion, or culture are not officially recognized. The values of the French Republic (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity)

are supposed to transcend the particularities of individuals, and its laws are based on a strict separation between the religious and the political spheres. It is forbidden to distinguish people according to their national or cultural origins. Cultural, ethnic, and religious identities have meaning only in the private sphere. Avoiding the notion of communitarianism and multiculturalism, the goal of France's policy of integration is to provide everyone a place within the nation. Within a context of increasing social problems and poverty, France is currently searching for a new model of integration, no longer referring to the former goal of assimilation.

The Role of Care and Education Settings

Early childhood services are key sites for enacting national goals for integration and the creation of new citizens.

Écoles maternelles. In France, 3-year-old children, both citizens and immigrant children (about 8%), attend *écoles maternelles* (see earlier). Play is seen as an important component of the *écoles maternelles* because it provides an opportunity for children to share a common language and values. The *écoles maternelles* and elementary schools are also known as “schools of the Republic,” a term used since the end of the nineteenth century and constructed in opposition to the power of Catholicism. Today, many believe that secular policy provides protection for minority religions by calling for the absence of religious signs in public life. This law has recently been an issue for Muslim families, related to their wish to have their girls wear veils.

However, the central objective of *écoles maternelles*, as the primary place of integration, is to provide all young children with an equal opportunity and with an equal chance to succeed in school, through a focus on French language which is a priority in the preschool curriculum. At the end of this curriculum, there is an initiation to other cultures through traditional songs, but mother tongues other than French are not promoted. The role of parents is traditionally limited, but some innovations toward more inclusion have been developed, particularly in priority education areas (*Zone d'éducation prioritaire [ZEP]*) where immigrant populations concentrate, in the suburbs of some cities around Paris or in the provinces.

The care sector. A smaller number of immigrant children attend *crèches* and other care services because a smaller number of these mothers work. However, this is changing as more women from these communities are entering the workforce. Efforts are made to encourage them to use part-time *crèches* or parent and children centers, not as immigrants but as disadvantaged families. The goal is to introduce important early socialization to their young children and prepare them for entry into *école maternelle*, as well as to help the entire family integrate socially. When the young children of these families attend *crèches*, some attention is paid to cultural diversity, based on psychological ideas encouraging enhancement of the continuity of care between families and centers. For instance, in a recent French-Japanese comparative study, it was observed that in French *crèches babies*, mostly from immigrant families, who are rocked to sleep at home, are also rocked in the

center, while generally the other babies are put to bed rapidly with their pacifiers. In-service training contains some introduction to the maternal practices of other cultures and includes discussion of the kinds of cultural projects described in more detail below.

More generally, including and supporting parents is one of the main issues. Although working with parents is important, analyses of institutional practices often reveal contradictions, infantilizing and stigmatizing parents while at the same time demanding too much from them. However, there are some fruitful innovations, empowering poor families (including immigrant families) in some cooperative crèches that are working specifically on diversity issues. These initiatives are carried out by their national association of cooperative crèches (*Association des Collectifs Enfants, Parents, Professionnels—ACEPP*)—within the European network called Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training (DECET), where various modalities of parental participation are being tested.

New Partnerships between Early Childhood and Culture Professionals

In the early 1980s, two main associations initiated innovative projects based on new partnerships between early childhood and culture professionals, which led to an incentive policy launched by Ministry of Culture in 1989. The first of these, *ACCES* (Cultural Association against Exclusion and Segregation), was created by three children's psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. These psychoanalysts developed prevention projects, within a Winnicottian and Piagetian theoretical framework (see Jean Piaget), that were based on providing babies with books in the places where they are found: the waiting rooms of pediatric centers, places where childminders meet, etc. The second association, *Infance et Musique* (Childhood and Music), created by a pediatrician and a musician psychologist, developed musical projects, including multicultural projects, in crèches and other places in disadvantaged areas.

A cultural policy of early childhood. With the aim to democratize culture, to improve quality in early childhood services, and to reduce social exclusion, The Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, developed a new cultural policy toward young children and their families. Beginning in 1989, subsidies were given for cultural projects proposed by early childhood services, cultural or training associations, or municipalities for children under the age of 6. These projects, supported for two- or three-year periods, have to promote close cooperation among early childhood professionals, culture professionals (artists, librarians), and parents in order to ensure continuity between services and families.

However, continuation of these projects has also been sustained by other mechanisms of financing, such as early childhood contracts (*contrat-enfance*) between municipalities and Family Allowance Funds (CAFs). The goal of this financing was not only to increase the quantity of services but also their quality. These types of projects can also be initiated by schools and sustained by other types of contracts, for instance between schools and municipalities.

Implementation and effects of the cultural projects. Through the implementation of this policy, important subsidies were given for cultural projects linked to the work of the two pioneer associations and others created later. The most common projects involved books (particularly for crèches), which were and are still largely developed in cities in the north, west, and southwest of France. Some other programs have led to interesting experiments, such as theatre projects for a young audience. The introduction of early childhood professionals to new cultural and artistic approaches (and the artists discovering new perspectives) have contributed much to the enrichment of play activities in care services as well as learning activities in *écoles maternelles*, reducing some of the more questionable practices and improving the atmosphere of the settings. When culturally focussed training sessions included both preschool teachers and care professionals (center professionals as well as childminders) the results were particularly fruitful. Beyond the local transformations they produce, they contribute to the emergence of a common professional culture of early childhood (for children aged 0-6), which is dramatically missing in France.

Today, when cultural associations offer animations and training for all the children, the focus is on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including immigrant families. For instance, in Paris, the association *LAP (Lire à Paris: Reading in Paris)* focuses its projects in waiting rooms of pediatric centers attended primarily by these populations, in social centers along with literacy classes for their parents or the mothers, and more recently in full-time centers where children, for social or health reasons, are waiting to be adopted or cared for in other families (if they cannot be returned to their parents). Books are read both from the French repertoire as well as from other cultures. There are no quantitative assessments of the effects of such projects on children and their families, but qualitative data (testimonies of teachers, etc.) converge to show significant impacts of strong and coherent projects, carried out in some cities. One example is a small city in the north where mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds tell stories to the children and are progressively involved in the project. There is a strong partnership in this city between an association and the *ZEP*.

Other Initiatives

Among other initiatives related to the issues addressed here are the *classes* and *actions passerelles* (bridging classes and projects), where the cultural projects described above often develop. These programs, based on institutional partnerships between municipalities and departmental administrations of education and health, and with cooperation between teachers and professionals of the care sector, aim to facilitate the transition to *école maternelle* of young children cared for at home, including many children from disadvantaged and immigrant families. Until recently these settings, which are also based on a mixed professional culture of care and education, were not receiving enough support at the national level. Despite a lack of studies showing how diversity is taken into account in these programs, several examples in some cities suggest the richness of such innovations.

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Sylvie Rayna

Family Involvement in France

This discussion of family involvement addresses relations with two types of centers: crèches for children under 3 and *écoles maternelles* for 2- to 6-year-old children. As described earlier, *écoles maternelles* are free and open to every child, whether their parents are working or not. Crèches are not free, and although the decree on care services (August 2000) no longer requires parents to work, in practice children attending crèches have working parents. Due to the history of these institutions, parents are considered more as recipients of public and professional services than as real partners, except in the case of parent cooperatives (*crèches parentales*) run by nonprofit associations. However, recent writings in both the care and education sectors recognize parents as the first educators of their children and coeducators with the centers, and tend to promote family participation.

The Background: Imposing Moral Values on Working-Class Families and Keeping Parents at a Distance

During the nineteenth century, crèches and *écoles maternelles* provided services for economically disadvantaged children. The relationships with parents were strongly influenced by the sociopolitical context: industrialization, child labor, poverty, infant mortality, political troubles, and religious conflicts. The first *écoles maternelles* (1826) and crèches (1845) emerged out of social utopian ideals and charitable policies. Since this time, the aim of social control and normalization of the working-class families has partly conditioned the relationships with parents. Different reasons led *écoles maternelles* and crèches to close their doors to parents: Republican principles and the fight to reduce infant mortality.

Republican principles. The Republicans set out to break loose from monarchical ideas and the power of Church. In 1881, the goal of uniting the French population within Republican values was implemented throughout the republican schools, which included *école maternelle*. When this integration took place within the public system, the principle of egalitarian treatment of all the children kept parents at a distance.

Combating infant mortality. Fighting infant mortality became the first goal of crèches. Linked to Pasteur's discoveries, the objective of crèches shifted from charity toward health and medical aims. Maternal education became more and more influenced by hygienist prescriptions. In 1945, the child and maternal health centers (PMI) were created, from which the first the regulations for crèches appeared, requiring medical personnel (child nurses and child nurse assistants) as staff. Due to fear of health contamination, parents' presence was prohibited in the crèches, and they were assigned inferior status relative to the professionals, who came from the hospital sector.

Opening the Doors to Parents: Rationale and Results

Two factors led crèches and *écoles maternelles* to open their doors to parents during the 1970s: the increasing attendance of children from middle- and upper-class families and the widespread dissemination of a psychological discourse about the importance of parent-child bonding. Starting around the events of the May 1968 student revolution, and due to the interest of "new parents" in a collective education for their children under the age of 3, the concern about the parent-professional connection resurfaced. These parents from middle- and then upper-class families expressed new expectations and made new claims (anti-authoritarian education, coeducation, etc.). Groups of students created the first parent cooperatives within university campuses. These cooperatives (which were officially recognized in 1980) brought to the forefront the value of parent involvement and cooperation with professionals.

Psychoanalytic studies on the effects of early separation and maternal deprivation disseminated beginning in the 1950s were also influential. I. Lézine, a pioneer who defended the idea of the complementary role of family and *crèche* and who developed an early childhood psychopedagogy, trained the first psychologists employed in crèches during the 1960s. Their critical approach gave support to the claims of the "new" parents, and contributed to the reopening of crèches to parent involvement.

As a result, in 1975, an official government document again allowed parents to enter the rooms where their children lived in the centers. Home-to-center transition practices requiring mother's presence were implemented, as well as the first conferences with parents. However, parents were still far from becoming partners. This document underlined simultaneously the importance of exchanges with mothers, during which a health education should take place. In 1983, another document instituted *crèche* councils, which were to include parent delegates. These councils never developed because parents were generally not informed of their right to this involvement, due to worries about what might result from their actual participation.

The pressure of upper-class parents in école maternelle. In the 1970s, the increased number of children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds attending the *école maternelle*, which occurred earlier than in *crèche*, led to the progressive transformation of the pedagogy from the prevailing productive model to an expressive

one. Aiming at the development of the child's personality through the implementation of expressive activities and a more liberal attitude of the teachers, this new model reflected the influence of a psychological perspective on the young child. In 1977, the official texts supported these values and recognized parental involvement. School councils were created and, unlike with crèches, were developed successfully. Parents elected their representatives every year, and on the national level the voice of the two main federations of parents, which were concerned with the whole school system, became stronger. In 1986, a new text provided the parent delegates with the possibility of participating in educational issues, but the teachers resisted this sharing of the educational territory. In fact, parents' involvements were generally focused on material issues, like supporting the local educational team's requests to ministerial or local authorities for more resources. Among the delegated parents, lower class parents were (and are) rarely represented, and the opportunities organized by the schools to meet all the parents (formal parent-teachers conferences once a year, etc.) are not very attractive to them. The cultural and social distance between these parents and professionals increases misunderstanding and exclusion.

Toward a Partnership?

Today parental participation is officially encouraged both in *écoles maternelles* and in crèches, but practices change very slowly. The Law on Education (1989) reaffirmed parents' involvement with their children's school life. Parents were defined as "permanent partners of the school." The main role of teachers was to inform parents about their ways of working and the children's progress in order to increase parents' involvement in their children's early learning. However, parents' involvement in school generally remains punctual and limited (taking the children to the swimming pool, organizing the annual fete, etc.), and mainly concerns elected parents. The parent-teacher relationship still consists of individual exchanges, varying according to the families' social position. The new status of the teachers ("school professors") tends to increase the cultural distance with disadvantaged families. Moreover, the current focus on early learning tends to limit the presence of the parents in the schools and the informal exchanges. However, the general use of life notebooks, making the children "messengers," mediates the communication with the families, providing them an important support. These notebooks usually focus on a significant event in the daily life of the child. Some schools, however, develop interesting projects, which include strong parental participation, notably in priority education areas (ZEP) where the quality of the relationships with the families favors both children's school integration and adults' social inclusion.

Since 2000, all care services, including crèches, are required to develop a "project of establishment." These projects must include the definition of the families' place in the program and of their participation. The interior regulation also needs to include examples of parents' participation within the services. But there are no minimum requirements, or a clear definition of such participation. No evaluation is required. Therefore, changes in practices are very limited at

the moment. Parents' involvement is expected principally during morning and evening exchanges. Their presence at social events is appreciated, but except on rare occasions, their effective participation in crèches is practically nonexistent. Nevertheless, parents seem generally satisfied, but the relationships with the professionals present a variety of configurations for several reasons. Qualifications and status vary greatly among professionals: some have no diploma, whereas others have a child nurse, assistant child nurse, or early childhood educator diploma. Professional values and representations of children's needs differ among these different types of staff. Moreover, there is no national curriculum, so educational attitudes and projects can vary from one *crèche* to another one. Parents belong to a range of socio-professional categories, and although they share some common expectations concerning the *crèche* (children's blossoming and preparation for the *école maternelle*), some of them are willing to totally delegate their educational role, whereas others refuse any kind of educational delegation. Typologies of parents and of their relationships with crèches have been established (Bouve, 2001; Moisset, in press) but, in spite of a strong influence of the social background on these relationships, parents cannot be reduced strictly to their social standing: identical models of representation can be partly shared among individuals from different social backgrounds. In any case, it is the confrontation of educational and pedagogical practices between parents and institutions that underlies these relationships.

Supporting Parent's Competences

In 1998, a new idea appeared in the political and professional discourse supporting parental competences, which, in fact, goes well beyond the field of early childhood and is implemented throughout networks aiming at supporting parental functions. These networks include various kind of services, such as centers for children and parents (play centers that children can attend with their parents in order to reduce the isolation of the families) or centers for parental mediation (in case of parental conflicts). Crèches are considered to contribute to this effort, as are schools, where the necessity to "remobilise parents and to encourage families to exercise all their responsibilities" is officially mentioned (1998).

The articulation between parental support and parental involvement is ambiguous. Parental support may represent a modern version of the previous parental education within a framework with a background in social assistance and control, rather than promoting the emergence of new models. The notion of parental support is not explicitly linked with a notion of reciprocity, which is needed in order to bring equity and balance to relationships between parents and professionals. The question of the parental responsibility is often used to denigrate the supposed uninterested and uninvolved parents (and particularly those living in a precarious situation: single parents, immigrant families, etc). This raises the issue of the need to question the historical permanence of such suspicion about parents' competences.

The current orientation of the association of parent cooperatives (ACEPP) is, however, important to underline. This association supports projects based

on parental participation, including families from lower and intercultural backgrounds, and is carrying out an analysis of parental and professional competences within the European network DECET (*Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training*), with the goal of promoting early childhood services “free of any kind of discrimination” and supporting the participation of service recipients “as active citizens.”

Finally, it is important to mention that a gender issue underlies the issue of parents–professional or family–institution relationships. These relationships refer essentially to relationships between mothers and female professionals. An important task is to encourage more significant father involvement both in their own children’s education and in early childhood services. Could such a change induce a different configuration within parent–professional relationships?

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Catherine Bouve

Early Childhood Education Pedagogy in France

The division that separates the child-care system from the education system in France is reflected clearly at the level of pedagogical orientations and practices. The term “pedagogy” is standard usage in *école maternelle*, because it is considered a school. But this term is sparingly used in child-care centers, where the terms “education” and sometimes “psychopedagogy” are preferred. The assumption seems to be that “pedagogy” refers to school learning and not to child development. However, pedagogical models do underlie the practices of the different care and education services, linked to their own traditions.

Pedagogical Models in the Care Sector

In the care sector, pedagogical models follow those that developed within crèches and have then spread throughout the whole field. For about a century these models were based on the maternal models imposed by the dominant discourses. They were then replaced by professional models, based currently on dominant psychological orientations.

Maternal models. Since they were first established, crèches have had a primary social function (baby care and assistance to mothers from the working classes). The educational function, also present, was based on Rousseau’s educational philosophy, centered on gentleness and persuasion. This informal model was popularized by F. Marbeau, a magistrate and municipal councillor who set up the first *crèche* in 1844 in Paris.

However, this model fell out of favor with the coming of *puériculture* (specialized infant care and nursing), when the battle against high infant mortality rates in crèches was launched. But the hygienist principles popularized by doctors from the 1870s onward were accompanied by moral prescriptions (rocking babies in one's arms was forbidden, and the child's access to different kinds of objects was restricted). Such choices marked a new conception where early training of infant behavior was the priority. What had originally been an open pedagogical model in the crèches turned rigid with the adoption of more and more rules.

The sharp drop in infant mortality in the 1950s marked a turning point coinciding more or less with the expansion and popularization of psychological studies and knowledge concerning child development from the 1960s.

Specific professional models. The rise of interest in the social and educational role of child-care institutions owes much to the work of I. Lézine (1964) who insisted on the doubly positive aspect of the crèches, not only a "help to parents" but also an "educative setting for children," and encouraged the entry of psychologists in these services. Studies conducted by psychoanalysts in nurseries also gradually relieved concerns about emotional deprivation among young children raised in a collective context.

After 1968, models of *Éducation Nouvelle* spread due to the influence of the new education movements. A significant voice heard in defense of the "cause of children" was that of F. Dolto, psychoanalyst and "educational doctor" who, in her writings and radio interviews, addressed professionals and parents, urging them to adopt an approach based on respect, attentive listening, and confidence in children. This conception was echoing the expectations of new parents' (from more upper-class backgrounds) who were beginning to invest in crèches at this time.

The introduction in France of the pioneering work conducted in Hungary at the Loczy nursery contributed to a new outlook on young children and important changes in practices (autonomy, continuity of relationships, etc.).

Gradually, with the introduction of training programs inspired by all these new orientations plus some innovative programs based on cultural activities (music, books, plastic art), crèches achieved their own place and identity, by distinguishing themselves from the maternal model and maintaining a certain distance from the school model.

From the 1980s on, many initiatives developed, favoring relational stability and continuity (same-age or heterogeneous groups of children in the charge of adults acting as stable points of reference). The importance given to play and verbal and nonverbal communication in social and emotional development led to a diversity of proposals to enrich the children's experience. Fieldwork showed the surprising social and cognitive capacities of the children as well as the creativity of the staffs.

Without supposing that all crèches develop the same pedagogical approach (due to the decentralization of the care sector), one can assume that their past and present evolutions as well as their current official objectives (well-being and harmonious development of children) make their pedagogy very different from that of the *école maternelle*.

Pedagogical Models in Écoles Maternelles

Historical overview. The pedagogical function of the *salles d'asile*, ancestor of the French *écoles maternelles*, had been clearly asserted since its creation in 1826. Brought under the charge of the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1837, these centers provided assistance to children between the ages of 2 and 6, while teaching basic literacy. Archives mention the use of teaching material, like tables of letters and numbers, abacuses and other counting machines, linked to the curriculum (focused on reading and writing, arithmetic, science, history and geography, religious education, drawing, music, and gymnastics). The strictly controlled organization of these centers favored “mutual education.” This made possible the acceptance of a very large number of children. More than a hundred children were sometimes grouped together where some older children taught the younger ones.

These centers became *écoles maternelles* in 1881. Interest in childhood and in the education of young children grew further. P. Kergomard marked a turning point in pedagogical options. From about 1875 onward this inspector denounced the regimental training of children. She insisted on the need to abandon the repetitive and rigid collective techniques, and progressively introduced play, in line with Rousseau’s ideas but also with Fröebel’s German kindergartens. Two sections were set up, one for younger children between the ages of 2 and 4, and the other for those between 4 and 6. Numbers were limited to fifty per class. Although the curriculum mentioned the distinctiveness of the *école maternelle*, which is “*not a school in the ordinary sense of the word*,” it remained attached to the division of the school timetable according to subjects, though reduced at Kergomard’s initiative. The distribution of subjects over the school day was based on a pedagogical model alternating lessons with play situations.

The professional corps of female inspectors for *écoles maternelles*, officially set up in 1910, played a decisive role in the spread of new pedagogical models thanks to the introduction of pedagogical lectures (in-service training). Their role was progressively strengthened by a professional association, the general association of preschool teachers, founded in 1921. The new pedagogical orientations advocated by the *Education Nouvelle* movement contributed to the growing interest in approaches centered on the activities of the child and the social life of the group. Contributions of the Italian Maria **Montessori** and of the Belgian O. Decroly contributed to the spread of a pedagogical model including planning of activities around “centers of interest” and stimulating learning materials adapted to children’s activities.

The dynamism of the general association of preschool teachers, its national congresses and regional meetings, grew during the 1960s, favoring reflection around a pedagogy of expressivity and creativity. “Children’s art,” encouraged by C. Freinet, came to be widely represented in teaching practices. The demand of families from the upper classes strengthened this “expressive model” based on the expression of the child’s personality, which became predominant in the late 1970s.

Current pedagogical options. Since the end of the 1980s, along with classroom furniture and materials for play and learning (including children’s literature, usually abundantly available in schools), work materials have been a concern among

teachers. Widely published and distributed through professional journals and by a rapidly expanding sector of school publishing, photocopiable work sheets as well as workbooks are used as learning material for children's individual work. Used in many classes of the middle or older group, sometimes even for the youngest children (2- and 3-year-olds), they suit the pedagogical specificities of a newly defined preelementary model. Introduced with the 1986 curriculum they include, nowadays, an evaluation of the learners' skills.

The *écoles maternelles* today are specifically attuned to the development of early skills defined in the curriculum, which is linked since 1995 with the elementary school curriculum. Simultaneously the same initial preparation is given for teachers in *écoles maternelles* and in elementary schools, and the separate corps of specialized inspectors has been done away with. While these measures aim to ensure easier transition between *écoles maternelles* and elementary schools, and despite the fact that the curriculum recommends maintaining a distinctive and separate pedagogy in the *écoles maternelles*, the risk of an overly rigid approach cannot be ignored. However, debates around different pedagogical options are regularly triggered as each school is required periodically to reflect upon its own pedagogical project.

Classrooms are usually composed of several play areas, a space reserved for artistic activity, a library, and an area where all can gather as a group. A separate room is usually reserved for physical activity and a dormitory allows the youngest group a nap.

The distribution of activities is based on a timetable set at the beginning of the school year. Along with the activities corresponding to the five areas of learning, defined by the curriculum, time is devoted to receiving the children every morning, to meals and refreshments, recess and rest.

The school day usually opens with a morning ritual using a variety of pedagogical resources: calendars, timetables, class lists for marking attendance and tables for distributing tasks amongst children, weather information, etc. Some teachers choose to vary these resources over the year to keep up interest and involvement.

Practices are far from uniform, but a general pattern is established: on the one hand, individual activity alternates with small-group activity or whole-class activity, and on the other, activities chosen by children alternate with others structured by the teacher, sometimes in collaboration with his/her assistant (ATSEM). The idea that play, action, experimentation as well as structured activities ought to be integrated together into learning seems to lack acceptance in the classrooms, where, in fact, activities often seem to be split into distinct parts. The organization of activities in small groups itself is rarely used to stimulate cooperation among children.

Pedagogical Models in Leisure Time Centers

Regulated in the 1960s within a care perspective, the legal framework of the leisure time centers, which operate during out-of-school hours, now includes an educative role. The staff of *animateurs* base their approach on an educational project using leisure time activities. School holidays are most suitable to more ambitious projects carried out in partnership with local institutions like libraries, museums, play centers, sport associations, etc. Particularly in urban settings, the

variety of activities offered to the children calls for the regular use of the culture and sports infrastructure. These options are also likely to familiarize their parents with these local resources. This obviously brings up the question of equitable access to such resources in different rural and urban settings.

Mutual Interactions to Be Strengthened in the Future

Despite their specific pedagogical characteristics, professionals of the different sectors point out the advantages of their mutual interactions when they are involved in some common local projects. Innovative experiments, developed in the cities within local educational contracts (CEL) and particularly important when carried out within deprived areas provided with additional resources (ZEP), tend to stimulate organizations toward practices more suitable to the needs of children and families. Pedagogical experiences such as transition classes (between families and school), where professionals from both education and care work together, have allowed the emergence of new blends in professional practice. But mandates from administrators concerned with security and with aligning practices with those of the elementary school limit the development of such evolutions in practice.

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Véronique Francis

Curriculum

The French system of the early childhood education and care is characterized by a significant contrast, from a curricular standpoint, between the domains of child care and early education. On the one hand, the *école maternelle* has a national curriculum that defines a set of school learnings. On the other hand, child-care services do not yet have precise official educational orientations.

The Curriculum of the École Maternelle: A Brief Historical Overview

The *écoles maternelles* (and still earlier, the *salles d'asile*) curriculum was established from the beginning. Between 1855 and 1921 these programs were reproducing the curricula of elementary schools. With exception of the transmission of the republican values, the content of these encyclopedic curricula changed very little from 1881, when the *écoles maternelles* were integrated into the French system of education. Thanks to dynamic female inspectors of *écoles maternelles*

such as Pauline Kergomard, who introduced new ideas about early education and play activities, a specific preschool education progressively emerged over time.

After 1921 this deep transformation went on for more than fifty years without any new official curriculum. The national association of preschool teachers, created in 1921, has played (and continues to play) an important role in the dissemination of this specific preschool culture. However, for half a century a “productive” pedagogical model was dominant. This model changed after World War II along with the changes in the social makeup of the *écoles maternelles*, including the presence of more and more children from middle- and upper-class families. During the 1970s, the dominant model became an “expressive” one.

In 1986, national guidelines were established. Three main goals were defined for the *écoles maternelles* as follows:

- “schooling” (the child must get used to this new environment)
- socializing (socialization is acculturation)
- learning and practising (developing abilities)

Physical activities, communication, oral and writing expression activities, artistic and aesthetic activities, technical and scientific activities are the main domains supporting these goals.

In 1989, the Law on Education integrated these orientations, placing the child “in the heart of the educational system,” and organized the primary school, including both the *école maternelle* and the elementary school. Three cycles of learning (three years each) were conceived in order to bridge the two schools:

- Cycle 1, the “cycle of early learning,” covers the first years of *école maternelle* (children from 2 to 5 years);
- Cycle 2, the “cycle of basic learning,” includes the last year of *école maternelle* and the first two years of elementary school (children from 5 to 8 years);
- Cycle 3, the “cycle of reinforcements,” concerns the last three years of elementary school (from 8 to 11 years).

In 1995, this primary school was granted a curriculum based on this new organization into cycles of learning. Currently, the curriculum for the *école maternelle* (including cycle 1 and the beginning of cycle 2) is the first part of the one designed for the primary school as a whole. This curriculum was reaffirmed in 2002.

The Current Curriculum for the École Maternelle

The current curriculum is defined in terms of competencies within several domains of activities that children should have acquired by the end of the *école maternelle*. In this curriculum, republican values are reaffirmed with the challenge of offering equal opportunities from the very beginning of school, linked with an objective of excellence for all.

The following five domains of activities are presented in the 1995 national curriculum:

- Living together
- Learning to speak
- Acting and expressing emotions and thoughts with one’s body
- Discovering the world
- Imagining, feeling, and creating

Teachers are to develop their educational projects and organize the children's activities within this framework. Teachers are encouraged to evaluate each child in order to guide their individualized support for the learning progress and validate a satisfactory level of competence for entering elementary school.

This curriculum, focused on learning, does not give much space for play. The only reference is to a limited amount of playtime in the courtyard (thirty minutes), in the morning and in the afternoon.

Mastering the French language became an absolute priority in the new curriculum published in 2002, under the title *What Do We Learn in the École Maternelle?* Thus language, "at the heart of learning," is now the first domain. The aim is to develop various language activities within effective communicative situations, providing each child with numerous opportunities to speak, and to learn and use language, not for evoking current events (previous, future, or imaginary events) but to be familiar with writing French and building the beginnings of a literary culture. When French is not the native language of the children, immersion is advocated. More opportunities to communicate are to be provided to these children. A first contact with a second language (foreign or regional language) is encouraged for the 5-year-olds. Competencies to be acquired in the language domain are the following:

- Communicative competencies
- Competencies related to description of action (language in situation)
- Competencies related to evocative language
- Competencies related to writing: writing functions, familiarization with literature and writing language, discovery of sounds, drawing activities and writing, discovering alphabetic principles

However, the curriculum mentions the necessity of a specific pedagogy for young children, as follows: "the child builds, following his own way, his acquisitions through play, action, autonomous research and sensory experience."

The Implementation of the Curriculum

French teachers generally follow the main principles of this curriculum, although among older teachers there is some nostalgia for the *école maternelle* of the 1970s, which was characterized by greater liberty and creativity. This was the preschool the younger teachers experienced as children.

The curriculum provides teachers with a range of references to guide their educational planning, including the following:

- the regular use of audio and video recording equipment, in a specific corner of the classroom and in every classroom of the school, will foster the development of listening, attention, and expression skills; or
- "from the very first paragraphs to a full text writing meaning," a school project based on the enrichment of graphic activities, the discovery of a real sense of writing and the use of children's' cultural diversity; or
- the theme of the year, on water, for instance, designed in numerous activities inducing oral and written language.

The different parts of the day seem to be conceived according to the aims of the curriculum. Thus, the daily sequences of collective morning rituals are oriented

by at least two domains of activity: “language” and “living together.” Children are supposed to

- acquire a sense of time by anticipating events,
- acquire the sensation of belonging in a social group,
- recognize each other as individuals,
- recognize their names and the name of a friend.

French children’s experience within the *école maternelle* is a student experience based on a wide range of exercises that are considered and referred to as “work.” Play (pretend play with dolls, constructive play with blocks, etc.) is possible, but only after having finished the different individual tasks linked to the curriculum, as proposed by the teachers, generally organized within small groups.

Crèches: The Hidden Curricula of Care Services

There is no national curriculum for children under 3 years of age in the care sector. However, hidden curricula are underlying the practices of a wide range of professionals in these settings, who are not teachers but instead belong to the social and health sectors.

A brief historical overview. Crèches, created in the middle of the nineteenth century, had charitable missions (see earlier). During the twentieth century these settings were dominated by a strong health orientation. Until recently the educational nature of crèches was not officially recognized.

Toys, and consequently play, were introduced into crèches first by psychologists who began to work in these services in the mid-1960s. During this same period a new kind of professional, the early childhood educator, was integrated into the paramedical team. In the 1970s, under the influence of these new professionals, due to expanded research on early development, and through pressure by parents from more privileged backgrounds, the crèches became attractive “places of life and education.”

In contrast with the *écoles maternelles*’ orientation toward learning, crèches are focused on development. Adults do not expect formal results, but guide children in the acquisition of autonomy. Starting in the late 1980s, cultural activities with very young children (books, music, etc.) developed, supported by the Ministry of Culture. While official texts concerning care services remained focused on sanitary dimensions (health and security), over the past twenty years most of the crèches have developed a “life project” or an “educational project,” even though it may not be formalized or written down. Several psychological and pedagogical sources of ideas and information have informed the professional practices through the initial and in-service training of staff.

The new legislation (2000). In 2000, the new decree on care services recognized the educative nature of care services for the first time. One mission consists of taking care not only of health and security, but also of the development and well-being of the children. The decree requires that each care service must now write

an “educational plan.” This plan defines the objectives and resources used to provide care, sustain the development, early learning, and well-being of children, ensure individualized relationships, and take into account the interdependence of the children’s physiological, psychological, and affective needs. A “pedagogical project” must translate this plan into the day-to-day practices of the center. A “social project” is also required, situating the service within the local political, economic, and social context.

In contrast with *école maternelle* teachers, who are provided with a national curriculum, no ministerial direction is given to professionals of the care sector regarding education in care services. The aim of the care sector, the “blossoming” of the children, is sometimes explicitly referenced in municipal or departmental regulations where, beyond play and learning, “awakening activities” are mentioned.

The implementation of the educational and pedagogical projects. So far, we do not know the extent to which crèches have designed such plans according to the new regulation. There are difficulties in the field, linked to the lack of national guidance and to insufficient resources devoted to the educational dimension in the initial and in-service training of staff. Within this void dominant medical discourse, including current psychological and psychoanalytical notions, continues to shape professional practices.

The childrens’ experiences in crèches are based on play: free play for the youngest, and more directed play for the older. Often initiated by the early childhood educators who now have a major role in the staff, this play aims at the development of the whole personality. Although the professionals in these settings share a common reluctance to speak in terms of learning (defined as the *école maternelle*’s school learning), despite the fact that they recognize the important social learning included in the process of socialization of the children, they tend to use the word “activity” more frequently than “play.”

Conclusion

Curriculum in French early childhood settings reflects two different universes: the “school learning” world of the *école maternelle* and the health and social service world of the *crèche*. In the absence of greater national leadership these two universes will continue to exist, although there is some movement in the direction of greater emphasis on promoting child development for the youngest children.

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Marie-Laure Vitali

Assessment

In France there is a strong culture of evaluation, which has an older and more formal tradition within the education sector, but is now emerging within the care sector. On one level, ministries and public agencies regularly carry out studies contributing to the evaluation of the French early childhood system of care and education. They also regularly put out calls for research that is carried out by universities and research organizations. Researchers inform policymakers through their own research projects on the implementation and effectiveness of care and education policies. On another level, the staff and quality of early childhood education (ECE) services are assessed by inspectors and other professionals responsible for oversight. On a third level, children's accomplishments are now supposed to be evaluated by teachers in *écoles maternelles*. This is not expected in care services.

Assessment of Systems

The education sector. Evaluation is carried out through the general inspection of national education (IGEN), which publishes yearly thematic reports. Other services within the Ministry of Education also contribute to the evaluation of the evolution and characteristics of the educational system. Regular statistical surveys are thus carried out and published in various documents. Evaluation of primary school policies (including both *école maternelle* and elementary school) is also conducted by these ministerial services or by researchers (universities, National Institute of Pedagogical Research, etc.). Since the 1980s this assessment has addressed primarily those mechanisms and programs aimed at prevention of school failure.

Studies on the functioning and impacts of the priority education zones (ZEP), which receive supplementary resources, have shown the positive effects of this positive discrimination policy, implemented since 1981 in France, on students' school results, class environment, and teaching conditions. Studies on the time management of children's lives within school hours and leisure time (ARVE), a policy implemented during the 1890s in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sport, have shown an expansion of the interface between schools and local communities, despite a lower level of involvement of the *écoles maternelles* than of elementary school. The implementation of the learning cycles, the pedagogical reform included within the Law on Education (1989) in order to improve continuity of learning (conceived in the frame of three-year cycles), has also been studied. These studies document the important practice changes required (including teacher cooperation related to each cycle) and difficulties encountered.

Some studies are specific to the *école maternelle*. Since the early 1980s most of these have focused on the schooling of children aged 2–3, and have examined the policy decision to give priority with funding to early schooling within the ZEPs. A recent study focused on the effectiveness of the ZEP has shown that those ZEPs in which high proportions of children receive *école maternelle* at age 2 (average

60%) have better long-term educational performance than those ZEPs with low *école maternelle* rates for their 2- to 3-year-olds (average 33%).

A report on *classes passerelles* (“bridging classes” including professionals from both the care and the education sectors) by both Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Affairs, concluded that these interesting experiments need further evaluative studies before being expanded.

Care sectors. Numerous studies have been carried out to see whether and how the current objectives of care policies are being met: policies offering parents free choice of an individual or collective care; those favoring children’s health, safety, development, and blossoming; those preventing exclusion and inequality. The Ministry of Social Affairs conducts statistical surveys on the care services and routinely issues calls for research projects. The National Family Allowance Fund (CNAF) also conducts studies and launches calls for research projects. In the late 1990s, CNAF prioritized analyses of the quality and effects of the different kinds of care services on child development (including, for the 2-year-olds, comparison with *école maternelle*). Despite the methodological difficulties encountered, these studies, based on various criteria and tools, converge to show the positive role of nonfamilial care and education provision on the social and cognitive development of the children. Although not favoring one type of setting over another, the studies show that crèches play a compensatory and preventive role for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Some studies have shown the importance of policies contributing to improving the quality, equity, and coherence within the care sector, for instance those concerning coordination mechanisms implemented at the municipal level, or in partnerships supported by the Ministry of Culture within an early childhood policy framework.

In 2002, the Directorate of Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DRESS), within the Ministry of Social affairs, together with the CNAF and with the Council on Employment, Incomes and Social Cohesion (CERC) conducted a large survey of child care in order to provide a precise picture of the different solutions adopted by parents. Five studies focused on the rationale for and process of choosing child care have been selected for a secondary analysis of the data. Within this general framework on reconciliation of work and family responsibilities, several other studies are currently focused on local innovative care solutions, taking into account the evolution of the parental needs (e.g., atypical hours of work, etc.), particularly those of lone-parent families, of families with precarious jobs, and of poor families.

Further studies on leisure time services for children attending *écoles maternelles* are to be carried out, due to the high use of these services by children of disadvantaged backgrounds.

Assessment of Personnel and Services

Education sector. Education offices at the departmental (regional) level are in charge of the management of primary school teachers (promotions, transfers,

etc.). The pedagogical oversight of these teachers is assigned to inspectors (IEN), who are no longer specific to the *écoles maternelles*, but rather are in charge of both the *écoles maternelles* and the primary schools. In France, directors of schools have no position in the evaluation hierarchy and do not participate in the teachers' evaluation.

The aim of the inspections is to assess the quality and conformity of the teaching practices related to the national goals and curriculum as well with the goals of the school. Official texts summarize these objectives, as well as the methods and criteria of the inspection. Teachers are first inspected during their second year of teaching, and then every four years, on the average. Generally, this assessment is based on direct observations of the pedagogical practices, and discussions with the teachers. Despite a negative perception of this kind of control by the trade unions, inspection sometimes provides some teachers with opportunities to demonstrate the value of their work and to receive support and guidance. However, the integration of the inspectorate for the *écoles maternelles* with that of the elementary schools is often conceived as contributing to the loss of the specific professional identity of teachers working with children under 6 years.

An informal evaluation is made by pedagogical counsellors and teacher trainers (IMF) who regularly meet and observe novice teachers. Assistants (ATSEM), who are municipal employees, are assessed by municipalities. Due to their proximity within the school, some directors of schools would like to participate in their evaluation.

Care sector. The care sector is monitored, on a departmental level, by child and maternal health services (PMI), which is responsible for licensing and monitoring care and leisure time services. Within PMI, doctors, nurses, psychologists, early childhood educators, and social workers are in charge of the monitoring of these services and of the training of the licensed childminders. The PMI's technical advice, required for all services before opening, and then later assessments, aims at insuring conformity with the national regulations (2000) concerning ratios, personal qualifications, etc. Despite the diversity observed from one department to another, controls are generally made on three levels: hygiene and safety, protection of childhood, and quality of care. Some documentation is currently required (pedagogical and social projects, internal evaluation, quality charter, communication tools with families).

Within the care services, evaluation of the professionals is part of the work of the directors (pediatric nurses or early childhood educators), who also have to coordinate the program of service and evaluate it in cooperation with the staff. On the municipal level, evaluation is one of the early childhood coordinator's missions, often conceived as a professional accompaniment.

Assessment of Children

Education sector. Linked to its main objective of preparation for school, assessment of children is to be done in *écoles maternelles*. Most of the required

competencies, according to the goals of the national curriculum, are evaluated by direct observations of child behaviors (for example, concerning the youngest children: speak spontaneously; feel comfortable in elementary actions such as running, jumping, climbing; autonomous during moving, dressing, or in the bathroom). The Ministry of Education has provided teachers with evaluation tools, but the practices of child evaluation vary from one school to another. Teachers often construct grids, more or less inspired by these official documents. The aim of assessment is to get a precise appreciation of each child's progress and use this to shape the teacher's actions. The results are used for information to families and during the cycle councils (teachers meetings within cycle 1, involving all the teachers of the *école maternelle*, and within cycle 2 including teachers in charge of the 5-year-olds and teachers of the two first grades of the elementary school). From 1990, a school report book is required for each primary school student. Although many teachers are convinced of the necessity of regular, but flexible, evaluations of child learning, many also fear negative effects and risks of an early stigmatization of school failure.

Detection of serious difficulties leads to intervention by the networks of specialists (psychologists, etc.) linked to each school. Oversight of children's health in *écoles maternelles* is the responsibility of PMI.

Care sector. There is no curriculum and no assessment of children in the care sector. A detection and prevention role is nevertheless assigned to PMI and to the professionals who are sharing the everyday life of the children.

Conclusion

Evaluative researches and practices can be considered as efforts to highlight and support the main current social and political issues. They are profoundly shaped by French values (republican values) and traditions of care and education sectors (health vs instruction), as well as of disciplines (psychology, sociology, etc.).

Evaluation is generally conducted separately within each sector. In order to reduce territorial disparities, however, early childhood departmental commissions were created in 2002, mixing representatives of the different sectors. They are just beginning to develop. Their missions include the evaluation of the needs of care and education within each department.

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Alexandra Moreau and Sylvie Rayna

Infant and Early Childhood Education

French Traditional Norms and Values

Working mothers with young children are now the norm in France. Women's work and the care of very young children outside the family are generally accepted, despite the fact that half of the under threes continue to be cared for at home. Crèches have been very popular during the past twenty years, despite the fact that parents are more likely to employ a childminder (*assistante maternelle*) than use a crèche for their child-care needs. Nevertheless, traditional values remain perceptible on different levels, leading to a number of contradictions and paradoxes.

Gender issues and professionalization. Currently there is some tension in French society between the care of young children on the one hand and gender equality on the other. Although the new norm of parenthood, based on the sharing of children's care, contributes to reduce the gap between the traditional roles of fathers and mothers, and to propose new definitions of fatherhood, the traditional cultural notion of motherhood is not fundamentally questioned.

In child-care settings, a paradoxical "sacred worship" of the maternal role is still visible. Men, whose knowledge in this field is not linked to any maternal competencies but is acquired, are very rare in crèches. They appear to threaten female professionals, whose status and salaries are generally low compared to teachers in *écoles maternelles* (partly explaining the current recruitment difficulties). Within the hierarchical organization of the French crèches, the pediatric nurse's assistants (*auxiliaires de puériculture*) who are working under the direction of a pediatric nurse and often under one or two educators, receive strong (often contradictory) demands. Psychologically oriented demands, having replaced the previous medically based ones, inhibit the expression of their own voices. Despite this, these caregivers can still develop effective professional competencies. For this to happen the context must favor agency and serendipity. Unfortunately these caregivers are often required simply to execute the prescriptions of the dominant discourse, due to their low positions in the status hierarchy.

At the same time, despite the important evolution (since the mid-seventies) of the institutionalization of the status of the childminders, which has regulated the market, the process of professionalization of these practitioners seems to be limited by a tacit maintenance on the *status quo* among childminders, those services in charge of licensing them, and parents. This is due to the belief that their work is a kind of extension of their role as mothers. Childminders, who have historically been the traditional carers in France, currently remain the dominant care arrangement. Nowadays, parents tend to choose childminders for practical reasons—they offer more flexible hours than crèches. However, some parents, mostly from advantaged backgrounds, prefer crèches for educational reasons, and others choose them for their natural dispositions and experience with young children, with this legitimacy being more based on their reputation than on a professional certification.

Parents as first educators. Another tension exists between the myth of an ideal family as the best carer of the young child, and the caring institution's attitudes toward parents as inadequate. If parents are officially recognized as their children's first educators, the relationships between the child-care professionals is often paradoxical. And if a number of settings develop fruitful projects based on a positive outlook toward parental competencies, including those living in poverty, this new task of supporting parenthood (linked to the increase of social difficulties) is being asked of early childhood professionals whose training does not prepare them for these two contrasting roles (child-care expert and supporter of parenting competence).

Neonates and Infant Care

Concerning neonates and infants, if they are not cared for by their parents (usually, by their mothers), they are cared for by other carers (either individual arrangements or crèches that accept 3-month-old infants). Parents who need to find care for an infant often use various solutions (holidays, assistance of family members, etc.) delaying for some weeks or months the beginning of the external care of the baby (sometimes waiting until September when a majority of children leave the *crèche* or the childminder and enter the *école maternelle*, at 2 or 3 years of age).

Maternal and Paternal Leave

In general, French people think that maternal leave is too short (sixteen weeks allowed for the first two children, then twenty-six weeks for the third child and more in case of twins). However, most appreciate the recent paternal leave that lasts for two weeks. The subsidized parental leave (an allowance allowing mothers to stay out of the workforce for up to three years) is not an option for all families, rather it is often "chosen" by a majority of relatively uneducated mothers. Among the reasons explaining this are the relatively low allowance paid for this leave, the relatively high cost of a childminder (for families with modest incomes), and the lack of crèches. Additionally, these mothers have more difficulty rejoining the workforce. To facilitate the transition back to employment, they can now receive both their allowance (parental leave) and an income during the last six months of the leave.

Studies show that the reduced work week in France (thirty-five hours per week) and the two most frequent modalities for this reduction (regular days or half days) have contributed to a reconciliation of family life with professional life (most women with young children using this time to care for them). However, many families would argue that these modified working hours have not shifted enough for families with infants and young children. Under economic pressures, many families piece together several care arrangements, despite the fact that crèches are generally opened eleven or twelve hours per day. Often parents who work far from their homes employ an additional babysitter and may use the adaptations of the care services supported by the public policies described below.

Policies: Recent Trends and Experiments

Diversification of child care. Beginning in the 1980s policies of diversification of care services, which assigned an important role to numerous decentralized service systems and providers, were implemented with the aim of increasing the choices available to families. These policies were also implemented to serve the families' diversified needs, which were linked to changing work conditions (flexibility, atypical working hours) and family forms (single parents). As a result, the number of part-time and full-time crèches and individual settings (childminders) increased. Innovative services developed, with nonprofit associations (including parental cooperatives) playing an important role in the creation of these flexible and proximity arrangements. Such services were facilitated by providing standard funding for care regardless of parental employment status and the number of hours the child attends.

Multi-accueils (multicare settings), more likely than traditional crèches to be located in small cities (half of the cities with more than 30,000 residents in the provinces have developed this type of setting compared to a third in the Parisian region), combine different collective and individual arrangements (including extended hours and occasional care). Today about 70 percent of parent cooperatives offer multicare.

Itinerant services have developed in rural areas, allowing early socialization of the children and provided time for their parents. Thus, minibuses with play and care material travel each day from one municipal building to another, according to a regular schedule. The cost of the equipment, functioning, and staff is shared between several villages. Financial help is also provided by CAFs (Family Allowance Funds—see financing entry) and sometimes by foundations and private sponsors.

Following French psychoanalyst, F. Dolto's experiments, parent-child centers, mostly run by associations and financially supported by municipalities and CAFs, aim to support parent-child relationships, strengthen social links, foster children's autonomy, reduce parent isolation, and prevent child neglect. Many centers created in disadvantaged areas combine psychology and social work. Networks, for childminders (*Relais Assistantes Maternelles—RAM*) and more recently for in-home care providers, have been created to provide children and adults in these individual types of care arrangements with socialization opportunities.

However, local policies are often not coordinated enough (due to the different traditions and aims of a number of the decentralized authorities) to face the new challenge of social cohesion. Despite the presence of significant institutions and financing in the care sector, as well as efforts made in cities that are financially supported by contacts (*contrat enfance*) with regional family allowance funds (*Caisses d'allocations familiales, CAFs*) social cohesion is still missing. The choice, for many parents, remains limited by the geographical disparities of the care provision and, for the poorest of them, by the costs.

Atypical Hours Arrangements

Within this context, recent national policies focused on parents who cannot use the traditional official settings and thus turn without any public help to

several types of informal arrangements (unlicensed childminders, family, friends) are encouraging the development of local initiatives welcoming children during atypical hours. Since 2000, recognition of these innovative settings is included in the official care regulations, and subsidies are provided toward more flexible functioning of individual and collective settings (opening earlier and closing later). Some services are open twenty-four hours, including crèches (although rare) and services employing childminders. Experiments with new care arrangements are supported by the interministerial services of cities' affairs and women's rights. These experiments, initiated by associations, often complement the traditional settings, with some professionals working both in a *crèche* and in a parent's home, for instance. The development of crèches provided by private companies, which were not numerous in the past, is now also being promoted.

Studies show that single-parent families are interested in centers that provide atypical hours and that cover a variety of configurations of work: variable, regular, or irregular hours as well as scheduled and unscheduled hours. Some experiments seem to contribute to a certain stabilization of the care of the children of these families, but these new arrangements remain flimsy at the moment. They affect the conditions of work and the work itself of the care professionals (childminders as well as, in crèches, pediatric nurses, assistants, and educators). The strategy of complementarity contributes to opening the frontiers between collective and familial settings, and the extension of the recruitment to other types of professionals (such as psychologists or social workers), linked to the specific projects of these innovative arrangements, contributes to reducing the segmentation of the social and health fields. Contrasts in the points of view of these different sectors are nevertheless noticed. Although a number of professionals working in crèches, where hours are atypical but regular, may be relatively satisfied, childminders working on irregular atypical hours feel more difficulties. Despite the satisfaction linked to the innovative aspects of these arrangements, and to the training and the additional supports that often accompany them, their views vary according to their own personal family situations.

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Sylvie Rayna

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion in France

Introduction

Currently in France, as in most European countries, there is a move toward increasing the participation of children identified as having special educational

needs in mainstream education. This marks a change in direction, following a period in which a large network of special education establishments were developed, and raises issues regarding the coexistence of the two educational systems (ordinary and special) and the need for the transformation of educational practices.

The notion of special educational needs has only recently been introduced in France and refers to children whose development has been affected by an emotional or physical difficulty or impairment. It also refers to children whose development has been impacted as a result of some other cause that is not necessarily apparent. The term special educational needs is not used, as in some other countries, to refer to children whose problems arise as a result of socioeconomic conditions, and terms such as “handicap” and “impairment” continue to dominate when referring to disabled children.

In the following sections we will begin with an overview of French legislation and then analyze the barriers to integration for young children in reception and education services (*écoles maternelles* or nursery school for children from 3 to 6 years of age, and day-care centers for the under threes). We will conclude with some key perspectives.

Legislation and the Organization of the Education System

There has been a gradual introduction and implementation of legislation supporting the educational development of children with special educational needs in mainstream settings. This legislation defines the principles and conditions governing such integration in legal terms.

The 1975 law regarding people with disabilities declared that children with special educational needs have the right to the medical care they require and, like other children, the right to education. Preferably, this education should be provided in a mainstream environment. If this does not seem possible, owing in particular to the seriousness of the impairment, education should be provided in special education establishments. When this situation arises, children are placed in special institutions based on impairment type. These special institutions will provide medical care and education, and most will accept children from the age of 6.

For children under the age of 3, the law envisages the creation of early intervention services, whose purpose is to prevent and detect difficulties related to sensory, physical, and mental impairment. These services incorporate various professionals (speech therapists, physiotherapists, specialized teachers) who intervene to support the children and sometimes visit them in their homes. These children may also attend day-care centers (*crèches* and *haltes garderies*) on a full- or part-time basis. One of the missions of the care services, as summarized in the recent regulations, (2000) is to “contribute to the social integration of children with special needs or with chronic illness.”

For school-aged children (i.e., those who attend *école maternelle* and elementary school), special education committees have been created to examine each child with special educational needs and determine the nature of his or her difficulties. These committees are able to arrange the payment of benefits to the

family and recommend placement in an appropriate special education setting. When the children are admitted to mainstream schools, they may attend school on a full-time or part-time basis.

However, integration in regular schools does not depend solely on the children's ability, but also on the educational conditions available. To facilitate the education of disabled children, numerous legislative guidelines have been introduced to improve professional practice, educational structures, and organization. Examples of those guidelines include the following:

- The legislation takes into account the importance of coordinating therapeutic and educational work. It also encourages the implementation of individual education plans based on consultation with all the partners including specialized professionals, teachers, and parents (1982 and 1983 laws).
- The integration mission falls within the general organization of both special and mainstream settings. The 1989 Education Act recommended the development of pedagogical approaches able to respond to pupil diversity, individual interests, and differences in family background. The law emphasizes the belief that such approaches facilitate the participation of children with special educational needs.

In the same year, new regulations gave special education establishments a mission to provide pupils with support for their education in regular schools. In theory, schools must accept children with special educational needs if they live in their catchment area. However, this is only possible if the establishments themselves consider that they have adequate provision in terms of teaching resources and the necessary staff.

Expansion of Resources

An expansion in human resources is planned in order to provide therapeutic and pedagogical support to children with special educational needs, and information and support for the teachers. These human resources include the following:

- Professionals in medical care and special education who provide pupils with special educational needs and support in school.
- Learning support assistants who provide the child with support under the guidance of the teacher. These assistants do not have a professional qualification and are paid by parents' associations or, at present, more often by the Ministry of Education.

Evaluating Education Policies

It is difficult to evaluate the effects of policies on integration in early years of education. Data provided by the different ministries (Social Affairs, Education) are not collected on the basis of common criteria. In general, the population of children from birth to six years of age is not treated separately from the whole population of children.

For a long time, evidence from numerous studies concerning the effects of integration policies in schools reflected the minimal impact of these efforts. For the school year 1989–1990, only 7 percent of the disabled children between 2 and 11 years old (i.e., children attending *école maternelle* and elementary school) benefited from education in a regular class. Many parents of disabled

children were dissatisfied with these results and felt that they are being poorly represented by traditional associations. As a result, these parents have developed their own organizations and are demanding additional resources in support of integration.

During the ten years following the 1989 legislation, there was a steady increase in integration. Ministry of Education's statistics for 1999–2000 showed that 12 percent of disabled children aged 2–11 attended mainstream schools on a full- or part-time basis.

Evaluations have examined the nature of the difficulties encountered and found that these arose principally owing to a lack of resources, too few specialized professionals and learning assistants, as well as a reluctance on the part of professionals. Other results of the evaluations include the following:

- Teachers of regular classes feel unprepared to take care of children with special educational needs. They fear becoming isolated and being expected to solely solve the problems associated with pupils with special educational needs.
- Professionals working in specialized settings fear losing their jobs or are concerned about the possibility of having to take care of only the most seriously disabled children.
- Collaboration between regular schools and special schools remains difficult. Historically, the two educational systems have developed along two distinct pathways in which different professional cultures have evolved. In most cases, contact between the two sectors is rare.

Crèches and Children with Special Educational Needs

It is generally considered that *crèches* and *haltes garderies* are more open to children with special educational needs than are schools. Listed below are the two reasons for this:

- The younger the children, the more tolerant the establishments.
- In *crèches*, a high proportion of the staff have some medical training; therefore, there is less reluctance than in schools to take the medical aspects of care into account and cooperate with specialists.

In general, the main problem is that there is a serious lack of care and educational provision for all young children compared with what is required.

The education of children with special educational needs in the mainstream environment is still insufficient in terms of responding to demand. Despite numerous legislative measures, the government has not succeeded in bringing about the necessary transformation in educational practice necessary for the successful integration of children with special educational needs. There is an urgent need, therefore, to develop a new direction in educational policy making.

Integration Philosophy and the Way Forward for Improving Practices

For a long time in France, the notion of integration has been linked to the notion of normalization. According to this notion, integration consists of providing the individual child with special educational needs with all the support he or she needs in order to benefit from the education provided in regular schools for other

children of the same age. However, education policies are now beginning to take into account the concept of inclusion, which involves the transformation of the whole social and educational environment in education, so that schools become more open to diversity. Inclusion presupposes an acceptance and consideration of all pupils as they are, as well as a commitment to supporting their progress through participation in a shared culture. One of the aims of educating children with special educational needs in a mainstream environment is to foster social understanding for all children based on nondiscrimination and the acceptance of everybody. From an inclusive perspective, partnership between the mainstream and special education sector is essential, as is collaboration between the professionals of these sectors.

Concerning the future, the state has confirmed that it is ready to provide greater financial support to mainstream schools, particularly by increasing the number of learning support assistants. However, legislation advances slowly. The new law regarding disabled people (2005) emphasizes the right of children with special educational needs to attend the school nearest to their home. However, special educational committees have the power to decide whether education in a mainstream school suits a child's individual needs.

Teacher Preparation

As in most countries, professional training is considered to be one of the essential factors in the development of inclusive education. It is necessary, however, to define the aims, the content, and conditions of an appropriate training. It seems particularly important that professionals in mainstream schools develop skills in terms of their educational practices to take into account pupil diversity. These professionals also need information so they can understand the nature of the difficulties experienced by children with special educational needs. It is often through discussion with professionals in the special education sector that the necessary supportive approaches are developed. Therefore, it is necessary to train all professionals to collaborate so that the specific skills developed in the special education sector can become a resource for the mainstream sector. In order to encourage understanding between the different professional cultures, training sessions providing opportunities to work collaboratively and share teaching practices between professionals from the different sectors could be organized.

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Aliette Vérillon and Brigitte Belmont

Current Trends in Early Childhood Care and Education Policies

France is well known for the longevity and the strength of its family and education policies, as promoted and implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education. These take several forms: (1) tax measures to reduce the fiscal pressure on families, based on the number of children in the family; (2) a whole range of financial aids and allowances to the parents of young children, both to help them vis-à-vis the burden caused by their children (family allowances) and to allow them to care for their children themselves or to have them looked after by another person (while they work outside the home); (3) a publicly financed range of services to care for the young children and educate them—*crèches*, *halte-garderies* (see earlier), and especially the *école maternelle* (which is free and open to children as soon as they reach 2, “provided that they are physically and psychologically ready to attend it,” in the words of the Ministry of Education).

Today France understands the importance of this effort as it supports a key demographic indicator—one of the strongest birthrates in Europe. But there is also awareness of the persistent insufficiency of ECE provision (for the under threes). For these reasons the French government continues to intensify its efforts in this arena, which is coupled today with an increased search for coherence and clarity in the mechanisms of parental assistance and of childhood care and education.

The Intensification and Simplification of Subsidies to Families: The PAJE

This intensification of support for early childhood and the effort to simplify the system can be seen in the establishment of the PAJE (*Prestation d'Accueil du Jeune Enfant*) which replaces various preexisting allowances. The PAJE is composed of a basic financial allowance intended for all the families on arrival of a new child. To it can be added the following:

- A “supplement for free choice of the young child’s care” for those parents wishing to resort to external care. To a certain extent this supplement increases the financial aid available for the use of an *assistante maternelle* (licensed childminder) particularly for the families of the lower and middle classes, who would not otherwise be able financially to reach this mode of care.
- A “supplement for free choice of activity” for the parents wishing to stop working for a while in order to look after their children. This supplement increases the financial aids granted previously to these parents. What is new is the fact that it is available directly with the first child, for parents who have held a job previously and for a period of six months.

This increased financial support for the parents on arrival of a child is coupled with an effort to promote and adapt the collective services and individual arrangements to make real the concept of “free choice” for the families.

The Promotion of the Provision Guaranteeing Free Choice

Adapting and developing collective services: the FIPE and the PSU. Since 2000, with the establishment of the FIPE (*Fonds d'Investissement Petite Enfance*), the effort to expand collective services has intensified. This fund, renewed in 2001, made it possible to plan the addition of 20,000 new places between 2001 and 2005. At the time of the Conference on the Family in 2003, a fund was again mobilized, aiming for 20,000 additional places. Within this effort to create additional places, company crèches are supported and, in a new development, provision is opened to the private sector.

But it's not only a question of creating new places; it is also necessary that they meet the present needs of parents. Also, beyond the emphasis on flexible and innovative efforts to create new places using the FIPE, measures have tended for several years to adapt the collective provision to the new needs of parents resulting from the greater flexibility in working hours and the new legal length of the workweek (thirty-five hours): the increased need for part-time services, for shifted or changing schedules, etc. Thus, the CAFs (*Caisses d'Allocations Familiales*) set up the PSU (Prestation de Service Unique) at the beginning of 2002. This new and unique financing measure prioritizes the public financing of services according to the importance of their operational innovations.

1. The acceptance of the parents' needs, including those that are not determined by professional activity and may be part-time;
2. The development of emergency services (for instance, to help unemployed parents to attend training courses);
3. Payment based on actual use of the services (by the hour and no longer by the day). This measure encourages program managers to understand and meet precisely the real time needs of the parents by establishing contracts with them. But it encounters difficulties in its implementation precisely because of the challenge of defining with the parents the hours their children will be present in the setting.

Promoting the provision of individual arrangements. Thanks to the PAJE, the use of licensed childminders (*assistante maternelle*) is accessible to a greater number of families. Therefore the question of the development of this kind of arrangement (which has already doubled since 1992) and of the increasing attractiveness of the childminder's occupation arises today with growing strength. To address it, a law was adopted at the beginning of 2005. Progress was made on several significant elements, including the following:

- a preoccupation with the improvement of the quality, through the installation of a preservice training course and the reinforcement of this training once the childminder is employed
- an improvement of the statute, increasing access to professional rights and protections
- a better legal framework for the relationships between childminders and parent-employers

This promotion of individual arrangements has the advantage of rebalancing the provision at the national level. Indeed, the geography of these arrangements is

relatively complementary to that of collective services, with childminders popular in the countryside, balancing the center-based services in urban areas.

The Early Schooling

Since the late 1980s the *école maternelle* has been regarded as a tool to struggle against school inequalities. Centered on an academic approach to the young child, the most recent reforms keep going in the direction of a “scholarization” of this institution. The “fundamental missions” of the *école maternelle* are reaffirmed with a particular stress laid on the learning of the French language.

Today, the question of early school for 2-year-olds is still bitterly discussed. After a series of reports underlining its advantages, particularly in those geographic areas with high poverty, high concentrations of immigrants and school failure (ZEPs), other reports have called into question its real effectiveness in the child’s school performance.

In fact, the treatment of the 2-year-old children in this educational institution is completely at odds with the other care services, where the adult–child ratio is very small and the focus is more on child development than on school learning. With little exaggeration one can say that the *école maternelle*, protected by the strength of the academic institution, acts with young children from the age of 2 with great independence regarding the primary questions that stimulate the field of early childhood in France. The Children’s Defender (*défenseur des enfants*), Claire Brisset, even called in her 2003 annual report for a halt in the development of schooling for 2-year-olds and the setting up of an in-depth reflection on how to promote better conditions for 2- to 3-year-old children. (The Children’s Defender is an independent authority charged, since 2000, with defending and promoting the rights of the child).

Toward More Coherence: The Departmental Early Childhood Commissions

Vis-à-vis the multiplicity of stakeholders in the field of early childhood (communes, departments, CAF, nonprofit associations, etc.), in 2002 the government decided to set up departmental (regional) early childhood commissions. The aim of these commissions, “reflection, council, proposal, support and follow-up,” is to support the development and the coherence of provision at the departmental level. A new element deserves mention: *école maternelle* and school-age leisure time services are integrated in this effort toward more coherence. These commissions must also disseminate information to the families, promote equal access for every child, and insure the quality of the provision within the department. After some initial difficulties these commissions have made great strides, and by 2004 were functioning in half of the departments in France. It is, however, still too early to know the extent to which this measure will bear fruit.

Supporting Parental Competencies

An interdepartmental policy since 1997 has aimed at supporting parents with and through the care and the education of their children. This very fuzzy concept conveys, in political speech, uncertainties born both of changes in living

conditions of families (precariousness, modification of working conditions) and of internal modifications within family relationships (increasing individualization resulting in an increase in divorces, blended families, and new kinds of relationships with children). There is concern that these transformations generate or encourage the weakening of parental authority and explain the increasing incivility of young people. This new tendency toward concern for parental competence seems to induce a change in the child-centered definition of the early childhood professional occupations, leading them to integrate into their competencies and their concerns another character: the parent.

Difficulties and Questions

The slow development of the collective services. In spite of the current efforts, the development of collective services remains too slow to meet the needs. There are several reasons for this. Departments and municipalities are encouraged and supported financially, but currently are not required to participate. Moreover, the operational costs of these services often make them falter. In addition, the occupations associated with these services suffer from great difficulties in recruitment. Even when the means are there to open these services, it may be very difficult to recruit adequate staff. A number of the *puericultrices* who are heads of crèches are retiring and these professionals, who are trained to work in crèches or in hospitals, often prefer this latter sector. There is a growing shortage of early childhood educators, who are more and more likely to become the heads of new services such as networks for childminders, and the *auxiliaires de puéricultures* are also in short supply, due to unappealing salaries and professional development.

The question of “free choice.” Beyond the efforts carried out to ensure—through a sufficient provision—a true free choice for families among the various options, this policy raises a question in itself. Indeed it puts forward a number of alarming social tendencies. The incentive toward in-home care (with the increased support for parents making this choice) causes a drop in economic activity among women with two children (including one under 3), and especially for relatively young and uneducated mothers. This fact brings an overall slowdown in the equalization of positions between men and women and leads more particularly to the maintenance of lower class families within a traditional model of parental roles, with only the families of the middle and upper classes finding a means for greater male/female equality. Confronted with this situation, the policies designed to help women return to employment still remain too weak.

This disadvantage in the policy of free choice could find a partial solution by devising a formula for a shorter and better paid parental leave (one year), which would keep women out of the labor market for a shorter time period and thus have less of an impact on their professional careers.

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Pierre Moisset

Financing

There is a strong system for financing early childhood education and care in France. National and local actors contribute to this financing, which is largely a public system. The main actors are three Ministries (Education, Social Affairs, and Youth), the National Family Allowance Fund—CNAF—(at the head of 125 Family Allowance Funds—CAFs supervised by the French state), departments, municipalities, and parents. The contributions of these different players vary by sector (care or education) and within one of them (the care sector), while the costs vary according to the different kinds of setting.

How Much Does Early Childhood Care and Education Cost?

The costs are higher in the education section than in the care sector.

Écoles maternelles. In *écoles maternelles* (see earlier entries) the current average annual cost of a child is almost the same as for an elementary school pupil, that is about 4,000 Euros. There are no parental fees, so this high cost, partly due to the salaries of the teachers, is supported by a very strong public investment. Since 1981, within a positive discrimination policy, more money was provided to *écoles maternelles* (as well as elementary schools) situated in priority education areas—the *Zones d'Éducation Prioritaire (ZEP)*.

Care services. Concerning out of school activities for school-aged children, the cost varies by municipality or by the nonprofit associations that organize them. Access is generally not free but the fees are low and are adjusted to parental incomes, guaranteeing access for disadvantaged families. As an example, in Paris the cost of the two hours after school in 2005 was between 0.40 and 1 euro per day.

Concerning the other care provisions (full time), the costs are lower than those of *écoles maternelles*, but parents assume an important portion of them. For crèches, attended by the under threes, the average annual cost for a child (full time) is estimated at about 1,200 Euros. For a childminder (*assistante maternelle*), it varies between 700 and 900 Euros. For in-home care, it is estimated at 1,700 Euros. In the care sector, these costs are shared by numerous actors (differently according to each kind of provision).

Who Pays for Early Education?

Two actors are sharing the costs of public *écoles maternelles* while the source of financing is more complex in the care sector.

Écoles maternelles. The cost of public *écoles maternelles* is shared between the Ministry of Education and municipalities, even the few private *écoles maternelles* (12%) are heavily financed by public funds. The Ministry of Education supports the main cost (teachers' and inspectors' salaries), while municipalities pay for buildings, furniture, pedagogical materials, and teacher assistants' salaries.

Care services. The Ministry of Social Affairs, which defines the CNAF program, partly finances the initial training of the professionals (pediatric nurses, assistants, and early childhood educators) while the Ministry of Youth finances the training of the personnel for leisure time centers.

CNAF supports the development of the care sector with funds covered by social contributions and taxes (9.6 billion Euros). Beginning in 2000, two types of additional grants, an Early Childhood Investment Fund (*Fonds d'Investissement Exceptionnel pour la Petite Enfance*—FIPE) and a Special Investment Support (*Aide Exceptionnelle à l'Investissement*—AEI) were funded annually (about 200 million Euros each). These allowed an increase in the number of places for children in collective settings.

CAFs also partly finance the functioning of care centers (which contract with the municipalities for the rest of their funding). This support was recently redesigned so that municipalities and nonprofit associations are not penalized by serving children from low-income families. This introduction of a single benefit sustains the development of *halte-garderies* (part-time centers) and *multi-accueils* (centers including various kinds of provision and flexible functioning) in order to meet the new needs of families stemming from recent constraints of the labor market.

Municipalities play a central role in the care sector. They partly finance full-time and part-time crèches and leisure time services (about a billion Euros). In the absence of requirements, they develop local early childhood policies that vary considerably in strength. Contracts with CAFs (*contrat-enfance*), created by the CNAF in 1988, provide financial incentives to increase both the quantity and the quality of care services. The CAFs subsidies cover up to 50–70% of new planned expenses for traditional care and leisure time provision, as well as for innovative settings. These contracts also help to coordinate the different settings, disseminate information to families, and train professionals. The number of such contracts continues to increase at the present time, involving more municipalities.

Departments (regional entities) are in charge of financing the childminders' training. They can also expand local policies in order to promote the development of early childhood services by financing the creation or the functioning of services and particularly networks of childminders or services for parents and children. Recently, CNAF experimented with contracts to departments with the aim of improving individual care (childminders), local coordination, information to families, and innovations.

Private companies are also involved with care arrangements. Some of them provide or finance places for their staff's children. They have recently been allowed to create services.

Parents have to pay for care, but if they use an official provision (i. e. not an unlicensed childminder), they receive subsidies to offset the costs of their care arrangements and also benefit from tax reductions. They pay the salary of the childminder or the in-home caregiver they employ, but if they use a *crèche* (run by municipalities as well as nonprofit associations which follow the same parental fee scale), they pay according to family income and size (one does not know what happens today for private *crèches*, recently created). On the average, parents pay 27 percent of the cost of *crèches* (municipalities and departments: 43% and CAFs: 30%). However, the range in family expenditures is large, from less than 1,000 Euros (40% of families) to more than 5,000 Euros (10% of families). For low-income families the public subsidies are inadequate, although they make an important contribution.

Subsidies to Families and Tax Benefits

Subsidies. The current national aim is to encourage the free choice of parents, who are facing not only a disparity of provision from one municipality to another but also the different costs from one care setting to another. Subsidies are offered to them by CAFs in order to offset these differences and to support the choice between a childminder, an in-home caregiver, or a *crèche*, as well as to help those (generally the mother) who choose to care for their own young children at home.

Until 2003, parents were provided with several types of subsidies, according to their choices, including an allowance for young children (*Allocation pour Jeune Enfant*—APJE), which was received by about 80 percent of families from the fifth month of pregnancy until the child's third birthday (159 Euros per month).

A parental education allowance (*Allocation Parentale d'Éducation*—APE) helped parents, who were not working (or in part-time employment) and with at least two children, until the child's third birthday (485 Euros per month).

Parents who employed a licensed childminder were helped for this employment (*Aide à la Famille pour l'Emploi d'une Assistante Maternelle*—AFEAMA). This allowance covered social contributions to the state plus an additional amount to offset the cost, based on family income (203 Euros for those with annual incomes under 12,912 Euros, 160 Euros for incomes between 12,912 and 17,754 Euros, and 133 Euros for those with incomes over 17,754 Euros).

Parents who employed somebody in their homes received an allowance for an in-home caregiver (*Allocation de Garde d'Enfant à Domicile*—AGED), which varied according to family income (up to 1,548 Euros per trimester when the family income is less than 34,744 Euros).

Studies of the use of these different subsidies (Bonnet and Labbé, 1999; Guillot, 2002) found that family income and the mother's employment status (plus the type and amount of the local provision of care) continue greatly to determine parents' "choice" and thus the type of subsidy they receive. Important differences were noticed between households receiving AGED (very high-income families), AFEAMA (middle- and high-income families), and APE (mainly unqualified mothers). For low-income families *crèches* are the less expensive setting, but *crèches* are concentrated in the Paris region and in other big cities. Some working parents, mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, use no official provision and thus

receive no financial help to care for their children (this includes about 10% of the under threes).

At the present time, in order both to reduce inequities and to simplify the system of family allowance, a unique family subsidy (*Prestation d'accueil pour jeune enfant*—PAJE) has replaced all the previous subsidies. It is determined by the number of children and family type, varies according to household income, and includes specific help for the employment of an in-home carer or a childminder (the financial help for the employment of a childminder is upgraded) or for caring his/her own child (also upgraded).

Tax deductions. In addition, parents can benefit from tax reductions for care expenses. The maximum tax reduction is 575 Euros per year, except for the employment of an in-home carer (the maximum tax reduction is 3,450 per year). About 545 million Euros is the total fiscal benefit related to early childhood care, provided through tax reductions.

Future Needs

We agree with other authors who have urged the continuation of family policy efforts that would make it easier to provide access to care services for all families. Efforts should also be made to increase the recruitment of professionals by upgrading their status and training, thus reducing the salary differences between these caregivers and the teachers in the *écoles maternelles*.

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Sylvie Rayna

Teacher Preparation in France

Introduction

In France, early childhood education is partitioned into two separate areas, with distinct provision for each sector. The crèches (centers) and childminders (home-based) provide care services for children under age 3, and leisure time activities for children attending from two years of age. The *écoles maternelles* are preschools for children over age 2. This distinction by sector is found, too, in the status and training of personnel in early childhood. The differences between these two sectors are numerous, especially with regard to the level and the length of the training, and the program orientation. There is also considerable diversity in preparation within each sector.

The Education Sector

Several kinds of personnel are working in the *écoles maternelles*. University-trained teachers, called *professeurs des écoles*, are national civil servants qualified to teach 2- to 11-year-olds in *écoles maternelles* or in elementary schools. In *écoles maternelles*, they are assisted by staff who are municipal workers.

Training of professeurs des écoles. Until the early 1990s, teachers were trained in the École Normale (teacher training college), which included specialized training in early childhood education for working in *écoles maternelles*. At the end of the 1980s, a crisis in the vocations and an increase in teaching requirements drove the authorities to upgrade the image of the teaching occupation. This was accomplished by significantly raising the wages of the teachers and increasing their level of qualification by providing them with a university level of training.

University Institutes for Teacher Training (IUFM; Institut Universitaire de formation des maîtres) have now replaced École Normale, providing within the same institution training for both primary education (*école maternelle* and elementary school) and secondary education (Robert and Terral, 2000). There is no longer a separate preparation for preschool teachers, but instead a common training for primary education.

A national exam is required in order to graduate from the IUFM. Candidates first have to pursue a *licence* (a three-year college degree) at the university (maths, biology, literature, science of education, or any other subject). They can then prepare for the national exam during one year in IUFM or independently. The exam includes written papers in French, math, science and art, a practical exam in physical education, and an oral exam on workplace experiences. Those who pass the exam then complete one year of professional training in IUFM (about 450 hours). This component includes eight to twelve weeks of supervised work placements in schools, where the novice is responsible for the class and teaches.

The teacher education curriculum, approved by the Ministry of Education, is focused on broad education-related courses, such as psychology, sociology, history of education, philosophy, and studies in education. Subject-based courses are also included, such as French, math, music, art, etc. Despite a high level of qualification, there is an obvious lack of specialization in early years education within the current teachers' training program (Oberhuemer and Ulich, 1997). This is also visible in practice; for example, inspectors may not specialize in *écoles maternelles*, but must control and provide professional development sessions to all primary school teachers.

During their careers, teachers are entitled to thirty-six weeks of in-service training, which is organized on a departmental level. Unfortunately, the sessions concerning early years and the available places are not numerous enough to meet teachers' needs. Fortunately, there is a well-established professional association for preschool teachers that organizes an annual conference and other forms of training and support for its members. After gaining some work experience, teachers can pursue further training to become a specialized teacher, educational psychologist, trainer, principal, or inspector.

Assistant teacher training (agent territorial spécialisé des écoles maternelles).

These municipal employees assist the teachers in the *écoles maternelles*, particularly those in charge of the youngest children. Their functions vary from city to city and even from school to school. Officially they belong to the educational team, but their role is focused on care (hygiene, meal, nap) and is often limited to domestic tasks, including the cleanliness of the classroom and preparation of the material needed by the teacher.

Until 1992, these assistants were regarded as custodial workers. Since then the status of the assistants has risen, due to the introduction of a mandatory training called CAP Petit Enfance that takes place over a period of twelve to eighteen months and leads to a certificate in early childhood. However, this preservice (in a professional school after the age of 16) or in-service training is focused on children's care and classroom hygiene. Assistants also have limited access to in-service training and career mobility. Yet in practice, when cooperation with teachers exists, training takes place throughout the preparation and sharing of activities carried out with the children.

The Care Sector

The care sector includes both home-based and center-based caregiving and teaching. Childminders provide care in their own homes, and in-home caregivers work in the child's home. Centers are staffed by pediatric nurses, early childhood educators, and assistant pediatric nurses.

Home-based caregivers. There are several different types of home-based caregivers.

Childminders (assistantes maternelles). Childminders need licensing approval to care for children in their own homes. This approval is granted by departmental authorities after assessment of the quality of the home environment and the health, mental health, and moral character of the applicant. The license is authorized for a five-year period, and is renewable on the condition that the childminder participate in a sixty-hour in-service training, including twenty hours during the first two years. This training, financed and organized by mother and child health centers (PMI), includes general notions on child development, individual rhythms, and needs; educational aspects of childcare; relationships with parents; and institutional and social frameworks. In addition, PMI provides in-service support by children's nurses and social workers. Training opportunities are available when childminders are employed in a *crèche familiale*, generally directed by a pediatric nurse (*puéricultrice*: see below) or participate in a network of independent childminders, generally directed by an early childhood educator (*relais assistantes maternelles*: see below). But childminders often complain about the lack of recognition (Blosse-Platière and al, 1995). A reevaluation of their status and prestige are presently at the center of a national debate.

In-home caregivers. No training is required for in-home caregivers employed directly by the parents. However, some municipalities offer in-home caregivers some training opportunities. This occurs, for instance, via childminder networks

(*relais assistantes maternelles*). In those settings an early childhood educator can provide childminders and in-home caregivers with educational opportunities, both for them as well as for the children they care for. When parents recruit in-home caregivers through private organizations, some training may be provided by these organizations prior to recruitment.

Center-based services. In center-based services, which consist of full-time or part-time centers for children and part-time centers for parents and children (*pouponnières, crèches, halte-garderies, accueils parents-enfants*), two kinds of professionals have tertiary-level professional qualifications. Pediatric nurses (*puéricultrices*) are the heads of these services. Early childhood educators (*éducateurs de jeunes enfants*) can be heads of part-time services and are allowed (since the year 2000) to be heads of small *crèches* (less than forty children). The training programs for these two kinds of professionals differ from that of other professionals with lower qualifications.

In this sector, initial training is provided by public or private colleges and in-service training by various centers. A national center and several associations are responsible for the in-service training of the municipal and departmental employees.

Pediatric nurses (puéricultrices). Pediatric nurses may work in hospitals or in mother and child health services (PMI) or in *crèches*. After gaining at least five years of professional experience as an assistant, a pediatric nurse may assume a leadership position within a *crèche*.

Initial training for these nurses is provided by public or private colleges approved by the Ministry of Health. After three years (general training to become a nurse), the training for working with children takes place over a period of twelve months (1,500 hours), with a nationally defined curriculum. The program includes 650 hours of theoretical and practical work centered on the knowledge of the child (physiology, psychology, psychopedagogy, diet and nutrition, child pathology, care), its environment (health policy, sociology), and the profession (roles and functions, administrative, social organization, management); 710 hours of field placement; and 140 hours of directed study and evaluation.

Experienced pediatric nurses can become early childhood coordinators on a municipal or departmental level. No mandatory training exists for this relatively new professional role, except for some in-service training sessions proposed by several universities and public training centers.

Early childhood educators (éducateurs de jeunes enfants). Early childhood educators work with groups of children or direct staff. Created in 1973, this profession has evolved over time (Verba, 2001). Early childhood educators, formerly called kindergarten educators (*jardinières d'enfants*), were once viewed as welfare workers with an educative function for young children. Currently, they receive training over the course of twenty-seven months in centers approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The curriculum for the early childhood educator program is defined at a national level. The 1,200 hours of both theoretical and technical training are composed of seven units: pedagogy and human relationships (160 hours); pedagogy of the expression and educational techniques (160 hours); knowledge of young children

from birth to seven years of age (240 hours); group life (160 hours); health, health education and medical-social protection (160 hours); law, economics, and society (180 hours); professional culture, methodology, and technique (140 hours). The initial training includes nine months of fieldwork. Early childhood educators may work toward a higher diploma in social work. They can also become early childhood coordinators.

Assistant pediatric nurses (Auxiliaires de puériculture). In center-based services the bulk of the staff is assistant pediatric nurses. These caregivers have completed a one-year vocational training in public or private schools, approved by the regional authorities and open to candidates who are at least 17 years old. The training includes ten months of field placements. Since 1994, part of the training has been carried out together with that of assistant nursing staff. It is composed of six modules focusing on hygiene, care, relationships, communication, ergonomics, and public health; and four field placements in hospital, medical, and maternity wards. The other part of the training is more specific to early childhood education (ECE), and includes modules (nine weeks) on the child and his environment: the prenatal period and birth, the development of the healthy child, the sick child, the handicapped child, and palliative care. This second phase of training also includes six field placements (seventeen weeks) carried out in different sectors of health (pediatrics, maternity ward, child psychiatry, bottle-feeding, diet), and day-care settings. In all, this training lasts 1,575 hours (including 630 hours of theoretical work and 845 hours of practical fieldwork). Career opportunities for these professionals remain very restricted.

The Leisure Time Sector

This sector, organized by municipalities and associations, is a part of the care sector devoted to children during after-school hours, on Wednesdays, and during holidays. These services may be located within or outside of the school buildings. The leisure time staff are not necessarily qualified. Nevertheless, most hold a diploma, the BAFA (*Brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur*), which consists of twenty-eight days of training related to out-of-school activities and is administered by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. This certificate qualifies a person to work in the leisure-time sector. The diploma required in order to become a director of a leisure-time center is the BAFD (*Brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions de directeur*). Provision of and participation in in-service training is voluntary. Cooperation with teachers within global school projects provides these staff members with training opportunities.

Conclusion

Although in general considerable heterogeneity and separation characterize teacher and caregiver initial training in early childhood care and education, in-service training sessions can be offered in some cities to professionals of both the care and the education sectors, based on a partnership between the different institutions in charge of early childhood. For example, training sessions on cultural activities toward young children and their families (books, music, etc.) are

being offered simultaneously to preschool teachers and crèche staff. These efforts, which need further development and expansion, open interesting perspectives by providing trainees with opportunities to know each other, to confront their own views on young children and education, to develop a mutual respect, and to take the first step toward a common culture of early childhood (Rayna and Dajez, 1997).

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Alexandra Moreau

Italy

Early Childhood Education in Italy

In this profile we begin by describing Italy in demographic terms, from an early childhood perspective. Attention then shifts to the historical and cultural underpinnings of Italian early care and education. This is followed by introductory discussions on pedagogy, curriculum, and the staffing of early childhood education (ECE) settings, all topics addressed in greater detail in later entries. We conclude with an overview of several topics currently challenging the ECE field in the Italian context.

Demographics

In 2005, fifty-seven and a half million people lived in Italy. The birth rate in 2004 was about 1.22 children per woman of childbearing age, well below replacement. The employment rate for women with children under 6 years was 50 percent, ranging from 67 percent for high-qualified women to 12 percent for those with low qualifications.

Italy, though small, is a very diverse country in geography, from the Alps and the influence of France on the western border, Switzerland and Austria to the northeast, to the Mediterranean and insular Sicily and Sardegna, including the full range from small rural traditional areas to metropolitan and industrial settings like Milano, Torino, and Genova. Lombardia, the region in the north with Milano as its capital city, is the most populated area of Italy (about 10 million inhabitants). This is the region with the highest per capita income in Europe and one of the highest rankings on school results by international comparison, whereas other regions are at very low levels of employment, income, and school results. Regions like Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna (where the municipal tradition of average sized cities like **Reggio Emilia**, Modena, Parma, Pistoia, Florence, and Bologna is strongest) have invested highly in early childhood education in the past thirty years and can offer full time, full coverage for children from 3 to 6 (*scuole dell'infanzia*, formerly called *scuole materne*: i.e., “maternal” schools) and places for over

30 percent of children under the age of 3 (*asili nido* or *nidi*, “nido” meaning “nest”). Some cities and regions of the south, although they are now reaching 80 percent of full-time coverage for children between three and six, can offer little more than 1 percent of their resident children a place in *nidi*. Overall averages in Italy are, therefore, highly misleading and analyses should be made at the regional or even municipal level.

Today (2006) over 90 percent of children between 3 and 6 attend schools (over 95% of five-year-olds), including children with special needs. City and state schools are free of charge and the time schedule varies between twenty-seven and forty hours per week. Only 10 percent of the children between three months and three years attend *nidi*, but figures range from 40 percent in some cities of Emilia Romagna to 1 percent in some areas of the south. *Nidi* are not considered a fully public service, but rather a so-called “service at individual demand,” and families pay according to income ranging from a symbolic fee to full cost. *Nidi* are also in general full time (eight to nine hours per day, five days a week), meals are provided to the children and the menu is set by health authorities, with special diets for health or religious reasons in general guaranteed.

The Culture and Tradition of Early Childhood Educational Services

Italy has only been a nation since 1861. Since the Middle Ages the city-states (municipalities or *Comuni*) have been the level of government with which Italians identify. Civic traditions, the influence of the church, and the socialist movement are the three major factors that have determined the development of early childhood educational services and are necessarily the cultural lens through which the existing panorama of policies should be examined.

Traditionally preschool services have been promoted by city governments (primarily in traditionally socialist ruled cities like Reggio Emilia, Bologna, or Florence but also in other big cities like Milano, Torino, Genova, Rome, and Palermo) or by parishes of the Catholic Church. There is also a tradition of mutual help among women in the North, where women’s leagues in rural areas have organized shared care since the beginning of the twentieth century. State involvement came much later—in the late 1970s. The first kindergartens or *scuole materne* date back to the end of the eighteenth century, established in the large cities of the North following the influence of enlightened thinkers like Ferrante Aporti and inspired by Friedrich Froebel and Johann Pestalozzi. In the first two decades of the twentieth century most average and big municipalities of the North and the Center had developed their own systems of schools for children between 3 and 6, along with network of social services for children aged 0–3 directed to mothers in need (ONMI—*Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia*). In that same period, the first Montessori schools opened in public housing sites in Rome, promoted by the municipality. Not long after that the sisters Agazzi opened their first school in Mompiano, where some decades later the *Centro Nazionale per la Scuola Materna* (National Center for Maternal Schools) was founded, supported by the northern city of Brescia, the national government, and the church.

After World War II, most cities of the Center and the North invested in *scuole dell’infanzia*. Reggio Emilia was an example, with the women physically building

schools for their children. When the State became involved in 1968, by passing Law 444 stating that state schools for young children would be built where they did not already exist, over 50 percent of the Italian children between 3 and 6 were already regularly attending a full-time service. This service was generally free, with only the meals to be paid for on a sliding scale based on income. Just three years later, in 1971, national Law 1044 was passed that promoted *nidi*, which were to be planned at a regional level and run by municipalities. It is within this tension among strong civic tradition, impulses from the state, and interaction with the church that the development of the Italian early childhood education systems can be understood. The tensions and coexistence of these three main actors accounts for the continuous growth of early educational services across years of continuous political change. It appears evident that only a common feeling and a widespread consensus about public funding of early childhood education, about sharing responsibilities for raising children, and about education as a community endeavor could account for the expansion of educational services for children even in years of economic stagnation and decline.

The ideas of children as an important investment, of shared responsibilities in education, and of the tradition of civic engagement metaphorically visible in the *piazza* (“public squares”)—the central gathering place in every *scuola dell’infanzia* or *nidi*—is widely shared across the country. But it coexists with a strong feeling of the importance and role of the family. This is expressed both in the legislation that guarantees maternal leave (five compulsory full-paid months to be used before or after childbirth, three more months without pay, the possibility of staying home longer without losing the job in public employment), and in the legal right to stay home without salary if the child is ill up to the age of 6. It is interesting to note that the first bill introducing maternity leave was issued contemporaneously with the *nidi* law. At that time, in the early 1970s, the Catholic culture advocated for longer maternity leaves, and the socialist Unions for more *nidi*. Today all parties promise more services for all children, and the differences are in the *forms* of education and care for the very young (municipal care versus company crèches or family networks). We can say that over the last decades, issues associated with the education and care of young children have been increasingly seen as public concerns rather than as exclusively women’s issues or family problems.

The following three dimensions mark the development of *scuole dell’infanzia* and *nidi*:

- the progressive inclusion of these settings within the educational system (*nidi* were previously conceived as social services) and the development of their own pedagogy, which is considered to be rooted in a developing “culture of childhood” rather than in a standard curriculum;
- the inclusive character of the educational services, conceived potentially for *all* children as an expression of a subjective right of the child herself;
- the tradition of *partecipazione*, a concept that encompasses both civic engagement and its expression in organized form of participation and control—the so called *gestione sociale* of the 1970s. This tradition was later sustained by a Law that regulates families’ representation and responsibilities in schools. In reality this links the daily life of children, family, and school together through practices such as

gradual transition from home to school, parental engagement in school activities and planning, projects expanding the school life by bringing children out into the community and community members into the school.

Pedagogy and Curriculum

Nidi have, over the years, gained an educational and pedagogical quality highly concerned with the emotional well-being of the children, marked by strong links between family and center, with attention focused on organizing spaces, groups, and activities in order to foster a strong relationship with one or two significant caregivers, child-child interaction, progressive autonomy, and general well-being in an appropriate and warm environment. The approach is holistic and there is no such concept as a zero-to-three curriculum, although symbolic play, manipulative and expressive activities and storytelling, and documentation are common features. The emphasis is definitely on relationships and on creating a “good,” “pleasant,” aesthetically and convivially attentive context through spaces, materials, carefully thought out routines, and social activities. The pedagogy of early childhood, or rather the “culture of childhood,” has developed in cities and across cities through a constant networking (especially through the *Gruppo Nazionale Nidi-Infanzia* and two professional magazines, *Bambini e Infanzia*). It has been strongly influenced not only by Piagetian (see Jean Piaget) and Vygotskian (see Lev Vygotsky) thought (Vygotski had been translated from Russian into Italian since the early 1960s, long before his writings were known in the Anglo American context), but also by Maria Montessori, authors like Henri Wallon and Irène Lèzine, by psychoanalysis and attachment theory and by the Hungarian experience of Loczy. Since the responsibility of *nidi* at the national level is not yet in the Ministry of Education, whereas at the local level in most cases *nidi* are run from educational authorities in continuity with the *scuole dell’infanzia*, there are no common National Guidelines. Regions and cities, however, have developed standards and instruments to assess quality and guidelines.

Scuole dell’infanzia had developed rich and significant experiences long before the State came onto the scene in 1968. They now follow National Guidelines called *Orientamenti*, *Nuovi Orientamenti*, and *Indicazioni* because the term “program” or “curriculum” is not considered appropriate to describe the pedagogy that informs the school system. These guidelines have traditionally been drawn through a wide national consultation with researchers, administrators, and practitioners. Even the new *Indicazioni* included in the 2004 reform bill do not radically reconceptualize the early childhood pedagogy established over the past thirty years. This reform reconfirms the achievement of a sense of identity, of autonomy, and of competence as main educational goals left to each school, with substantial freedom to schools to interpret the guidelines and to design their own curriculum. Project work, emphasis on children’s multiple symbolic languages, documentation, and a holistic approach are still dominant features in most Italian *scuole dell’infanzia*; but a stronger pressure toward a more structured curriculum and measurable performance outcomes has been emerging recently.

Although Reggio Emilia *scuole* and *nidi* are the most striking and widely known, many other towns deserve attention not only because they share some of the

characteristics of Reggio schools that are widely recognizable as a general Italian frame, but also because they have developed their own original systems, deeply rooted in the tradition of the community. Middle-sized cities like Pistoia, Modena, Parma, and Trento provide good examples, as do small municipalities like San Miniato in Tuscany and big cities like Milano, Torino, Genova, Bologna, and Ancona.

Staff

The staff of *nidi* and *scuola dell'infanzia* are called *educatrici* or *educatori*, words different from caregiver and teacher, which convey a meaning of educationally oriented care. The minimum required training for *nidi* staff is a diploma obtained from a teacher-training-oriented secondary school (*Istituto Magistrale*). Regular in-service training that can range between 100 and 150 hours per year, along with thirty to forty hours for group work and meetings and interviews with parents, is built into the contract as paid time. Nowadays a widely shared opinion is that basic training should be raised to a three-year postsecondary (university) degree in educational sciences or psychology, and many *educatrici* are already so qualified. Since 1998 the requirement for *scuole dell'infanzia* has been a four-year university course, and this will be raised to five years. *Nidi* and *scuole dell'infanzia* are coordinated by professionals called *coordinatori* or *pedagogisti*, who combine administrative and management responsibility with the task of pedagogical supervision and implementation of the educational offering and of teacher development.

Current Issues

The recent 2003 Law allows families to enrol their children in *scuole dell'infanzia* at age 2^{1/2} and also to anticipate primary school at age 5^{1/2}. This puts *scuole dell'infanzia* under pressure because of the growing demand of care for under threes, and challenges a long established system that has always resisted acceleration and insisted on respecting the child's pace. Teachers share what has been for many years a common feeling—namely, that early childhood years are precious and should not be quickly “consumed.” The conviction is that the experience in settings especially designed for children, rich and free of pressure, is by no means a waste of time. It is rather an important training ground for consolidation of the sense of self, of social competence, of exploration and of research attitudes. Many families, nevertheless, ask for more and want it faster. This pressure forces *nidi* and *scuole* to rethink, redefine, and renegotiate shared ideas about children with families, their common responsibilities, and the schools' mission. It does not necessarily mean that the pedagogy of early childhood education will have to yield to the acceleration pressure, but that it is necessary, at the beginning of a new millennium, to rethink, redefine, and retune fundamental educational goals.

A second emerging issue is intercultural education. Italy, for decades a country of migrants, is now a host country. Over 25 percent of the children who attend

early childhood services are born in families of non-European origin. If, on the one hand, the traditional inclusiveness of the early childhood education system accounts for a generic welcoming attitude, on the other hand the idealization of the child, the scarce knowledge of different cultures, and the resistance to activating special activities for any child (the compensatory model has always been rejected as stigmatizing) may prevent early childhood education services from fully exploiting the opportunity provided by the preschool years to foster active integration and prevent later exclusion and school failure.

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Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the general framework within which we think about education; it is the science, the epistemology where we reflect about education, its means, methodologies, and goals. The objects of pedagogy are educational relationships, situations where the educational processes occur, and educational practices and how the subjects involved experience them. Pedagogy is reflection about educational experiences that are characterized by values, goals, intentionality, intrinsically relational (or intersubjective), situated in culture and in time, and asymmetric. Pedagogy is at the same time a theory (of education) and a practical science, and is therefore both philosophical and political. It is a social science, one of the “human sciences” because the educational process can only take place in situations where human beings interact within specific and evolving cultural and political contexts. In order to be regarded as a science, pedagogy needs to be intentional, to make the ideas that it produces explicit, and to orient and give meaning and significance to the educational events and processes with which it deals. Educational events, experiences, and processes, as oriented around, studied, and interpreted by pedagogy, are social, socializing and inclusive, marked by different forms of cooperation and participation, constructivistic, and culturally situated.

Early childhood is a crucial focus for pedagogy because it is the period of life where the underlying assumptions related to the processes and the experience of growing, interacting, learning, being taken care of, and being educated can be observed at their origins; within the family and in other educational contexts less formalized and defined than school or other instructional settings. This includes the ideas of educating and caring adults within the family and in other contexts intentionally prepared for young children, and the social policies toward children, families, and working mothers. It also involves as one of its core interests *participation*; that is, how the persons involved in the educational process interact, share and take responsibilities, and *the places (loci)* where child development

and education occur: family/home, neighborhoods, early childhood services, day care, preschools, and so forth.

Early childhood pedagogy is founded on perspectives, approaches, and general categories rather than by specific frameworks and processes of teaching and learning activities (curricula). Curricula are the *hic et nunc* translation of broader theories and ideas about education. Actually the word curriculum does not appear in official Italian documents concerning preschool. At present we can, therefore, try to sketch a pedagogy of early childhood where on the one hand a few general ideas are widely debated and shared across many cultures, and on the other hand some specific approaches, rooted in specific communities (local communities or communities of researchers and decision makers) flourish, interact with other approaches, and eventually contaminate them.

Early childhood pedagogy is, in fact, both a very vivid expression of cultural niches and local particularities and the continuous contamination or *métissage* or crossfertilization of paradigms and practices. It is, therefore, a good example of the tension and dialectics between cultural identity and universal goals that characterize the contemporary world: thinking about children, their families, and the practices and goals of their education emphasizes both the personal and local and the general and universal values and choices.

Early childhood pedagogy is not a specific theory (and even less *one* theory); it reflects critically on the educational processes that take place locally and on the theories developed to interpret and orient them. This pedagogy operates in two directions. One is the “bottom up” direction. This involves the discussion and interpretation of already existing educational experiments, policies, and practices, when community or local experiences meet theories. The other, more traditional, and less active, constructive, and culturally conscious direction is where pedagogy inspires and directs the planning and conduction of policies, practices, and local experiments. This is the “top down” direction, where a community or a group of educators or researchers is “doing” or experimenting (e.g., a Vygotskian or constructivistic or **Reggio Emilia** or **Head Start** approach, or in earlier times when they were “doing” **Montessori**, etc.).

The pedagogy of early childhood education in Italy is currently oriented around the following:

- A broad and holistic approach, and more specifically the idea of an active, constructive, competent, and social child, interacting in culturally situated environments with adult, peers, and cultural artifacts, learning through a “guided participation in social activities.”
- The idea of multiple intelligences and languages (Gardner, Jerome **Bruner**, Reggio Emilia) and therefore of a necessary integration of languages, art, science, social interaction, etc.
- The consideration of the importance of the situations and environments in which the educational process takes place (physical environment i.e., the location of institutions and the significances conveyed by the organization of space, safety, and aesthetics of the environment).
- Attention to participatory processes (at a socioemotional, community and political level) in the definition of institutions and services in the engagement of families, decision makers, and citizens.

- Inclusion and therefore attention to diversity as a challenge and effort to develop respectful and deep transactions between all individuals, groups, and educational approaches.
- A striving for universal access to educational and care services as an opportunity to experience diversity, to negotiate meanings, and to develop a broader self.

The following are some key words connected with the term “pedagogy” often found in Italian literature on early childhood education:

- “*la pedagogia del benessere*”—a pedagogy of well-being or well feeling, indicating the need to connect educational opportunities with a deep sensitiveness to the child’s personal needs (bodily well-being, conviviality, links between family and school, times and spaces to play, rest, and share pleasure) and to the attention to the well-being of adults as well as children.
- “*la pedagogia del gusto*”—a pedagogy where the aesthetics, the quality of the materials, the environment of the objects, and images the child encounters are considered crucial for the forming of a full personality and identity and of a young citizen that learns to like, love, and respect the environment. Space and materials made available to children are considered “the third educator” as well as the first form of **documentation** that gives a message to the community about the value of childhood.
- “*la pedagogia delle relazioni*”—a pedagogy where interpersonal and social relationships are seen as a fundamental means for sustaining autonomy, enhancing the development of a strong sense of self, eliciting curiosity, and sustaining attention through dialogue, discussion, fun, and stability in partnership.
- “*la pedagogia della continuità*”—the very high degree of continuity that characterizes the Italian school system. Children stay with the same group of children and team of teachers for three years. This organizational and cultural choice explains the developing of long-lasting projects and the strict link between peers, their families, and teachers.
- “*la pedagogia della partecipazione*”—this concept, which is difficult to capture within the framework of home-school relationships, describes the community character of schools for children and the consciousness that for parents and children the school of the early years is often the first experience of getting in touch as citizens or future citizens with the communities, its rules and its opportunities. It encompasses both the ideas of control and cooperation of citizens of the community in establishing and running the early childhood education system and the daily practices connecting school with family and with the outside community, such as transition practices, meetings with group of parents, and common initiatives.
- “*la pedagogia della documentazione*”—documenting what children are and do through observation, listening, recording, and organizing with them and among teachers the projects in their doing, allowing children and adults to reread the past experiences, to renew memories and to rethink. This is both a form of evaluation and a way to illustrate and extend the culture of childhood that is developing in the educational context. This process has a long tradition and has been enriched and diffused in cities like Reggio Emilia, Pistoia, and Milano. It has strongly influenced the new form of evaluation (portfolio of competences) recently proposed by the new guidelines for nursery school.
- “*la pedagogia culturale*”—the consciousness of the cultural nature of ideas and practices concerning children and education, which is becoming more acute today

now that Italy is faced for the first time with a relevant **immigration** wave and needs to develop ways to reorganize, redefine, and expand the boundaries of the pedagogy of childhood without disregarding traditions and roots in the community. The need is to incorporate practices where the recognition of other identities and stories and the dialogue between children and adults coming from different backgrounds can become a first opportunity for new forms of socialization in the community.

All these ideas point to a way of considering the education of children as a shared social responsibility and the early childhood years as a very precious time in one's life, a time that should be tasted, explored, and experienced without haste. "Where is the hurry?" is a question posed in early childhood pedagogy in Italy today. This orientation is strongly challenged by the urges and trends of globalization, and by an imported trend based on a so-called "scientific" way to look at learning and curriculum, which is preoccupied with anticipating and accelerating the acquisition of specific knowledges and skills rather than supporting and protecting children's interest in researching, exploring, and playing around with new ideas and curious problems. This trend emerges with some contradictions in the National Guidelines (Indicazioni Nazionali, 2004). It will be interesting, over the next years and decades, to see how the Italian early childhood pedagogy will react or adapt to these trends.

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Susanna Mantovani

Play

Play is a multifaceted phenomenon that eludes clear-cut definitions. However, theorists who studied play agree on the fact that it is an aimless, freely chosen, pleasant, and "uncertain" activity. Play has no other goal than the pleasure that it offers. It is voluntary and freely initiated and its outcomes are unpredictable. Furthermore, play is a human activity whose value and function depends strictly on the social and cultural context in which it takes place. Different cultures attribute different social meanings to play and offer different sets of traditional play settings and forms (games) to players.

As Jean Piaget underlined and as broadly recognized, play is considered typically—if not exclusively—a behavior of children, characterized by pleasure, positive affection, and emotional engagement. It develops during infancy and takes different forms: from sensory motor activities such as running, jumping, object manipulation, rough and tumble play to games with rules (hide and seek, football and so on) passing through "pretend" play, a form of play in which objects, people, and spaces assume meanings different from those assigned in

ordinary life. Initiated by the adult (especially by the mother in some typical forms as peekaboo play), who acts as the first play trainer and partner for the child, play is one of the most important interactive and social behaviors of young children; it is a way to dialogue and share positive emotions with caregivers and peers. It also represents a way to approach the world that minimizes the consequences of one's action, allows learning in a less-risky situation, and provides a place where it is possible to express emotions and feelings freely (particularly in symbolic and sociodramatic play).

For these reasons play is considered an essential part of every child's life and vital to the process of human development. In order to play, children must be able to express themselves and use their best capabilities. Play contributes to elaborating identity, exercising abilities, reinforcing development, and enhancing learning.

How Does Play Relate to Children's Learning and Development?

From a psychodynamic point of view play, especially "pretend play," is seen as an arena of children's self-expression; a context in which it is possible to experiment with different identities and relationships, to develop a broad range of feelings and emotions, and to explore social meanings and roles. By representing affects and feelings in play, children can satisfy inner desires, experiment with different solutions to relational problems in a simulated way, and come to master anxiety and aggressive drives. From a cognitive point of view, play is seen as a primitive form of world representation that marks the distinction between objects and their meanings. It is characterized by combinatory freedom and prompts the process of finding new relationships and arrangements. But most of all, play in its social forms definitely promotes social learning. When playing together, children learn to take into account other people's points of view, to negotiate and respect rules, and to cooperate in order to create a shared setting. In its sociodramatic form, play also helps to test social and imaginative roles, particularly related to family and gender. Language development is also fostered by play, especially when play assumes a narrative character as in telling a story and if children, playing together and negotiating roles and plots, develop some form of metacommunication.

Thus play *per se* is neither synonymous with learning nor has it learning aims. But it can contribute to the fostering of what Vygotsky calls the "zone of proximal development" if it stimulates and exercises emerging capacities. For these reasons all children should have access to good quality, safe, and affordable play opportunities, with supervision provided where appropriate, in accordance with age and need.

In Italy, play is recognized as a right for all children, which has to be sustained by opportune policy interventions. The educational settings of the best Italian day-care centers and nursery schools give broad space to play in daily activities. They support play mainly by offering toys and furniture *ad hoc* (blocks, "pretend" play furniture, dolls, dresses to disguise, toy cars and trucks, etc.) organized in centers of interest where little groups of children can interact together. It is in fact also recognized that the social context of play is crucial because of its implications

for children's development and that to play with a small group of close friends is an important opportunity for social learning.

The Role of Adults in Play

The role of adults in fostering children's play, mostly with children from three to six years of age, is less emphasized in Italy. Caregivers and teachers give more relevance to peer interaction in play than to adult-child interaction. Adults offer material and toys, propose or suggest activities and then take mainly the role of supervisors without playing with children. There is, however, solid research evidence and a theoretical basis in support of the idea that, in order to foster children's development, teachers should promote children's abilities by actively and playfully interacting with them. Particularly an intervention based on tutorial strategies could offer a scaffold for promoting more developed forms of play and correlated abilities.

Play and Work

Another popular idea is that play is the opposite of work; that is, in educational contexts, the opposite of didactic activities. So in many Italian educational settings—although more in nursery schools than in day-care centers—the time span daily dedicated to play is called “free play” to distinguish it from that dedicated to didactic activities, which take place mainly in the central part of the morning. The practice of separating play from “work” has negative consequences: play is considered nonacademic, nonlearning time, and only valued as leisure activity. Didactic activity, on the contrary, aimed at fostering capacities and the acquisition of learning, is seen as an assigned, obligatory (*versus* voluntary) situation that cannot last beyond the limited span of attention of children.

Play is sometimes considered as a pleasurable way of learning and working. Such an idea, which is also present in official documents such as *Orientamenti* issued by the Ministry of Education as a guideline for nursery school education and curriculum, is often misinterpreted by teachers, who tend to present imposed didactic activities as playful and pleasant ones. Play can instead be really integrated with learning activities by orienting it toward socioemotional developmental goals. In this case great importance is often given to peer interaction and to sociodramatic play, which can be facilitated by offering opportune play spaces, time, and props, and by arranging children in small playgroups. Alternatively it can incorporate cognitive goals. In such cases (e.g., Pistoia and Modena nursery schools) spontaneous children's activities, such as exploratory and symbolic play, are fostered and oriented toward more developed and culturally valued activities by offering *ad hoc* material (books, images, scientific props) and through an adult-child interaction aimed at coordinating and expanding children's proposals and ideas.

Italian preschool caregivers and teachers have different understandings of how to incorporate play and work in early education: whether as peripheral to learning or as disguised academic work, whether as integrated with socioemotional development or as integrated also with intellectual developmental goals.

The importance of play for physical development is also recognized in Italian day-care centers and nursery schools, where there is almost always an indoor large space arranged with equipment for gross-motor activities and an outdoor garden furnished with a sandbox and props for physical activities. Due to parents' and teachers' preoccupations, outdoor play is limited by weather conditions and takes place mainly in the warm season (late Spring, beginning of Summer, and early Autumn).

Research on Play

Research on children's play in Italy shows a prevailing ecological and qualitative approach founded on observations of children in their daily life contexts, especially outside the home. The following aspects of children's play have been explored over the last decades: parents' ideas about the importance of play and its effective relevance in children's life; toddlers' interactions in exploratory and symbolic play; the role of gender in children's interactions; developmental stages in symbolic play; the role of the adult in enhancing children's play; how childhood culture is expressed in play; and how sociodramatic play affects children's narrative competence.

New challenges to play research come from multicultural experience in day-care centers and nursery schools, where attendance by nonnative children increases every day, and from children's play experience in educational contexts different from the traditional ones, called "play centers," whose ecological variables and their effects on children's play behavior and interactions have not yet been explored.

There are many open questions about how to incorporate play in educational curricula, which will be hopefully answered by further research: the link between play and academic activities (such as narrative, counting, reading, reasoning, etc.); the role of furniture and toys to enhance different kinds of play; and, last but not least, the adults' strategies to help children share play and become more and more expert players. An ecological approach, which interprets children's play behaviors as affected by contextual variables, is needed to know which situations better elicit children's developed forms of play. It would be desirable that teachers as researchers answer these questions by verifying the effects of their play practices and by reflecting on their ideas about play and education.

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Anna Bondioli

Quality

In Italy during the past two decades the issue of quality has mainly been addressed in connection with the definition and the planning of educational services for children between 0–3. The quality of services for children between 3 and 6 is conceived within the general national Guidelines and within the debate of how to evaluate the school system in general, which is just beginning to work through INVALSI (National Institution for the Evaluation of the School System) according to the 2003 reform bill. In some instances municipalities have developed their own guidelines and taken some initiative to define their local model and to control quality, but the newest and most interesting development of the definition of quality has taken place regarding the services for 0- to 3-year-olds, within a general conceptualization widely shared for all age 0–6 services. Issues like school readiness are not yet on the scene, and have in fact always been strongly resisted by the early childhood education world. But this issue is coming along, will inform future debate and the discussion and conceptualization of quality in ECEC might well become an important contribution for the discussion of quality in general.

The debate in Italy about quality in early childhood education started in the 1980s, and was informed by the following perspectives:

- The cultural organizational projection of a service ultimately conceived as an educational service for young children and their families, implying the idea of care but putting the pedagogical goals front and center.
- A shared understanding of scientific knowledge regarding children's competences and potentials, as well as of the benefits children could draw from an educational service in the early years of their lives.
- A new social representation of childhood and of the opportunities inherent in educational strategies based on the relationships between families and educational services, rooted and disseminated in those areas of the country where the development of crèches has been stronger.

The years during which the discussion and definition of quality was developed are the very same years that marked the beginning of a stagnation phase in national policies aiming at the development of the educational service system for young children. This was undoubtedly a time when, due to research and to practices successfully implemented, Italy was finally in a position to conceptualize quality, using this concept as a “comprehensive semantic container” of the different qualifying aspects of the system, including the following:

- theoretical assumptions,
- the subjects involved,
- relational structures,
- organizational and functional standards,

- strategies for designing and documenting experiences,
- coordination, monitoring and supervision, and
- rules and regulations and related control processes.

These are elements that may tell us how “good” a project or experience is, both from the point of view of the conditions which may determine its quality and from the point of view of evaluating its effectiveness.

Within this framework, when defining the elements that contribute to the quality of an educational service for early childhood, broad consensus seems to emerge in relation to the following areas:

- focusing on children and their competence/experiential construction in the design of the service;
- acknowledging families as having an active role as chief partners in the design of the service;
- building, over time, the relationships among children, educators and parents, with full recognition of identities and of active and constructive contributions from each of the three partners;
- considering the impact of the physical organizational context of the service and the need to determine quantitative and qualitative standards, as well as to identify acceptable adult/child ratios;
- focusing educational planning on the environment and organization of the physical contexts surrounding children, valuing local and original taste and traditions, emphasizing an educational style centred on listening, tutorial support, and respect which may help value individual differences rather than direct intervention deriving from preset goals, using observation, documentation, and evaluation strategies to outline individual profiles, strategies, and personal styles connected to a process- and discourse-oriented representation of children’s experience;
- attaching strong importance to organizational managerial structures and educational coordination structures in order to meet the need to ensure adequate and continuing “caring” management. Coordinators are a key figure to act as an external eye, to share reflections upon the project, to perform a supervising function on the educators’ work in order to guarantee consistency between the educational project, the resources and the organization;
- defining rules and regulations which may give substance to and set limits for the governance of the system, together with the related regulation and control strategies/procedures.

Although the debate around quality and related issues has been inspired initially by contributions and tools previously worked out in non-Italian contexts (see documents by the European Network and tools like the Italian versions and adaptations of Harms, Cryer, and Clifford, 1990; Ferrari and Livraghi, 1992), a number of specific action/research processes has led to the development of evaluation tools constructed locally with coordinators and caregivers and therefore more directly tailored to specific experiences in Italy (see the cases of Toscana, Emilia Romagna, and Umbria, in Cipollone, 1999; Bondioli and Savio, 1994; Bondioli and Ghedini, 2000).

However, the issue of quality—conditions to achieve it and strategies to evaluate it—is strongly linked to a multidimensional approach toward quality in order to protect and value the idea that, within some common standards, quality has to be defined locally; that it is strictly linked to the local culture, traditions,

and situations. Within this general frame of reference it can be understood why little attention is devoted to investigating the relationship between quality of educational services for early childhood and subsequent success in learning on the part of children, the so-called longitudinal effects. This is a theme in which Italian preschool and early education services have never shown much interest, because the cultural, political, and educational reasons to invest in early education and to define and evaluate quality are rooted in the correspondence and compatibility of the services with the community, and with the ideas and representations of children, rather than projected in a more “product-” or performance-oriented perspective that gains strength only when the compulsory school years begin. A “good” service is a service open to all children and good for them in the present, rather than a service that produces good students in the future.

Another feature of quality that has received attention is “perceived quality,” a factor that has contributed to but has not determined the definition of instruments and processes of quality control. Even less meaningful has been use of the concept “quality certification” (used in the corporate world), owing to its lack of attention to relationships and processes within educational services.

Some contributions have linked the issues of “quality” and “costs” from two different perspectives.

- to identify “threshold values”—functional and financial at the same time (in terms of number of square metres per child or maximum ratio educators/children) which should be taken as reference in order to make quality possible;
- to understand how, apart from those standards, quality basically depends on the quality of use of available resources;

Some developments within the educational service system over the last two decades have recently drawn attention to the need and potential connection between measuring quality and regulating/controlling a more pluralistic and diversified “market” of educational services for children and families. This has especially been the case with new services (part-time services, mother/toddler groups and company-based crèches) and new providers (cooperatives and other nonprofit organizations). These circumstances have alerted municipalities and regions to the need for the following:

- better defining rules and standards of reference;
- developing new tools to evaluate quality; and
- identifying procedures for regulation and control.

In regions of the country where services are widespread, interesting experiences have already been developed which identify the conceptual area of quality as the point of balance between the following:

- the development/evolution of regulation and standards (e.g. regions like Emilia Romagna and Tuscany have developed a system of regulations encompassing types of services, space standards, staff training requirements, adult/child ratio, etc.);
- the development of specific experiences of traditional and new services;
- the increase in the awareness and professional development of the subject (professionals) involved.

On the other hand, at the national level, the high diversity in the diffusion of early childhood services—the national average of infant-toddler services is around

10 percent, but it ranges from 1 percent to 40 percent—does not encourage a consistent effort to link together the extension of services and the conceptualization of quality standards. In other words, where the quantity of services is very low and far from the demand, both the lack of early childhood “culture” and experience and the pressure for quantity slow down the development of a serious conceptualization about quality.

The process of conceptualizing quality practiced within early childhood services has nevertheless become one of the most important dimensions in professional development and can also contribute to stimulate and update the national choices and policies to develop and qualify the ECEC system.

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Aldo Fortunati

Curriculum

Italian nursery schools have accepted the idea of a curricular framework with ambivalence. In fact, the very concept of curriculum has emerged long after establishment of the nursery school system and its basic identity defined and shared at local (municipal) and central (state) levels. In a sense many of those involved as coordinators, administrators, researchers, and theorists consider the Italian experience too important to define its educational significance merely in curricular terms. The development of a strong educational model for nursery schools took place well before the idea of curriculum became widespread in the United States and Europe, and educational experiments were in most cases first practiced, and only then diffused from the “bottom up.” The need for theoretical justification and a systematic formalization developed later, progressively and over decades, following from widespread community experiments.

Two different interpretations of the word “curriculum” coexist within the nursery school world in Italy. The first is an extensive connotation, where curriculum is intended as “fundamental architecture” of the nursery school system. This involves the established principles and the basic philosophy that inspires the educational model, the results of which are the methodological and didactic choices. The second is an intensive interpretation, according to which curriculum means the contents of knowledge and/or experiences and the methodology adopted to put them into practice.

Curriculum in Extensive Terms

The extensive meaning of curriculum can be traced to the original tradition of Italian nursery schools, where attention was focussed on experience and on practice. For a long time a definition of the schools' pedagogical, methodological, and didactic statutes in formal curricular terms was not deemed necessary or even sought. The nursery schools were established as a local community experience organized around the church or the municipality. The first nursery experiences date back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and much development took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, sponsored by the large city municipalities in the North and the Center (e.g., **Montessori's** Children Houses located in city public houses in Rome started in 1912). State nursery schools were first established much later, in 1968. Only then did it become necessary to define guidelines, called orientations and later indications to emphasize their open and flexible character in contrast with the stronger word programs used for compulsory school levels. We can say that in the Italian tradition, the "doing" and "finding solutions" in relation to concrete problems posed by children and community prevailed for many years over any definition of a preventive theoretical "source."

Nursery school has always been a full day experience and the need of working families for care has been always considered and strictly linked to the aim of creating an educational environment. Diverse local experiments of education and care, although inspired by some shared ideas and theories, were the basis on which national guidelines were drawn. These guidelines were defined broadly enough to allow established experiments to accept them and new experiments to flourish, guaranteeing both a common ground and the possibility for local community interpretation of the educational offers for children. Specific methods or locally developed outlines continue to coexist within the national framework. The attempt to devise an official national curriculum can therefore be considered the result partly of the merging of different experiences and partly of research in education and development.

Without using the word curriculum, the famous educators who influenced the nursery schools movement traced outlines for environment, organization, methodology, and content on which the educational offerings could be based.

- Rosa Agazzi (1866–1951), one of the educators who most influenced the Italian system after establishing the school in Mompiano (Brescia) with her sister Teresa, wrote many instruction books on how educators in the *giardino d'infanzia* (kindergarten) should work. Agazzi did her best to achieve an "alive school," and along the route traced by Friedrich **Froebel**, anticipated the "competent child" of later research as an active and creative being who has within himself the potential to grow and educate himself in an environment where daily life experiences become organized in a pedagogical perspective. The pedagogical heritage of Agazzi is in fact the awareness that every educational project must be based on children's real experiences and on their authentic and specific need to grow within their own community. The main task of the kindergarten, therefore, is to promote the child's educational development through action. From Agazzi's perspective competence is essentially linked to doing or acting in an organized way, without the need of

special materials but rather with well organized material and objects that could be found in the surrounding environment (the so called museum of little things).

- Maria **Montessori** (1870-1952) was also deeply convinced that each child could command a human potential that only needed an appropriate environment, adequate materials, and respectful and observing teachers to bloom. The environment she proposed was more organized and structured, strewn with stimuli that the child has to find and accommodate to while always following its own rhythm. Montessori assumed that the child already has inside potential and instruments waiting to be practiced and put to good use. Therefore the teacher is not there to “teach” but to allow and promote various intellectual occasions to help the potential to come out, be practiced, and become firmly established. In her words, “. . . knowledge can be given in the best way when there is a burning desire to learn . . . because the mind of the child is like a fertile field, ready to receive what will later sprout in the form of culture. But if the mind of the child . . . is neglected, or frustrated in its needs, it becomes artificially dulled and will later oppose the teaching of any notion.”
- Directly and indirectly Agazzi and Montessori inspired innumerable other experiences, especially in the north of Italy. The most famous and original in its reinterpretation of part of their tradition is that of **Reggio Emilia**, where **Loris Malaguzzi**, the director and inspirer of the nursery schools that developed from a strong community effort right after the Second World War, turned his attention in particular to the constructive creative child. Children “think,” they have ideas, they construct projects and try to fulfil them. From the beginning Malaguzzi wanted the school to be wide open to the parents and to the city. The school is deeply rooted in the area; it “belongs to” and represents the local community. The teacher must be capable, well qualified, and cultivated, and the children’s competence and creativity become visible through long lasting cooperative projects and art. Malaguzzi, drawing from Agazzi, Montessori, Freinet, and Bruno Ciari, from his own cultural and artistic experiences, and from the numerous experiments that were popping up in many cities in the 1970s, sketches children who are the following:
 1. *Expressive*—endowed with ample creative capacity. It is important to propose expressive activities, such as painting, graphic expression, drama, dressing up, storytelling, etc. With their imagination, and through constant dialogue and interaction with other children and with listening and provoking adults, children focus on their ideas, think them over, elaborate and reformulate them. Children have the right not only to appropriate but also to beautiful environments, painting, music, and everything that is expression at the highest level.
 2. *Constructive*—endowed with minds capable of observing, gathering information, discussing that information and assembling it in original ways, with curiosity and with a strong inclination toward exploration. This can happen when children are placed in conditions encouraging them to be protagonists and active participants.
 3. *Manual and visual*—children’s minds are strongly connected to the body, hands, and eyes, and it is necessary to give precedence to the practical abilities that are both essential for the solving of everyday problems and also useful for checking hypotheses and ideas, choosing and finding solutions etc. The hand guides the mind and is guided by the mind.

4. *Social*—expression, creativity, and learning happen through interaction, dialogue, and continuous negotiations between children, between children and adults, and between school and community.

Curriculum in Intensive Terms

The intensive meaning of curriculum can be found by following the progressive political engagement at State level, official documents, and scientific literature on early childhood education.

The following three steps mark the national nursery school system:

- The institution of State Nursery Schools in 1968 and the subsequent *Orientamenti per la Scuola Materna* (1969).
- The revision of these Guidelines, which took place in 1991 rethinking the pedagogical framework (*Nuovi Orientamenti per la Scuola Materna*). The revised text was widely discussed at the community level and in the academic and professional networks before being issued, and therefore contributed to a considerable cultural relaunching of nursery schools. It is based on three main educational goals or key words: reinforcing the child's identity, supporting the acquisition of autonomy, and the recognizing and sustaining of the child's competence.
- The third National document subsequent to the school reform bill issued in 2004 (*Indicazioni Nazionali per i Piani Personalizzati nella Scuola dell'Infanzia*) does not substantially change the general framework of 1991. The novelty in this document is that the general objectives of the educational process are spelled out in specific objectives of learning and broad areas called *campi di esperienza* (experience fields): self and others, body, movement and health, message fruition and production, exploration, knowledge, and planning. The criteria for documentation and evaluation (Portfolio of individual competences) are illustrated through many items and examples.

The *Indicazioni* are a move toward curricular organization in a perspective closer to a great part of the American and European debate. But they are perceived by many teachers and experts in the Italian early education field as a rigidifying and impoverishment of the nursery school experience, in its variety and developing culture. They can be regarded as a compromise (not very good but not too bad) between the “good practices” developed in many communities, the theories currently at hand and the need for specific orientation of schools and areas where the *cultura dell'infanzia* (the culture of childhood) and the *servizi educativi per l'infanzia e la famiglia* (educational services for children and families) have not yet developed.

Good Practice

The concept or principle of good practice refers on one hand to a model (a conceptual scheme in which different aspects of educational life can be connected and ordered in relation to a teleological principle that insures organic unity and coherence), and on the other hand to the structure of the experience (all the forms that the model assumes or can assume practically, in relation to possible or historical and social situations). The structure is the visible variable distinguished

by the things that are done, by the everyday situations, by the choices made at the moment. The model is the hidden variable that indicates the principles that inspire and infer the structure and are often implicit.

Two different outlooks, holistic or molecular, can be retraced in the different local experiences. They correspond broadly to the extensive and intensive approach to curriculum. The holistic perspective prefers a global form of guidelines in which attention to the overall context of the child's life prevails. The molecular perspective generally prefers to identify specific steps to reach knowledge and competence. The holistic experiments prefer wide-ranging aims that incorporate daily life, the caring aspects, and social and community experiences into the curriculum. They see the nursery school as a place in life where global experiences such as constructing one's identity, attaining self-sufficiency, making relationships with peers, interaction with the community culture and the attention to processes are a priority. The molecular perspective pays more attention to problems regarding teaching methodology and the contents of learning, with specific performance goals and a stronger preoccupation with results.

One perspective does not exclude the other. They are trends. In Italy, broadly speaking and with many exceptions, the first dominates in the municipal schools (e.g., Reggio Emilia) and the second in state and private schools. In many schools the two perspectives actually coexist due to the way the system has developed in a single city or school or to the influence of local experts.

The Domestic Child and the Apprentice Child

Finally, two further polarized concepts influence the thought and the practices connected with nursery school curriculum: the idea of the domestic child and that of the apprentice child. The school for the domestic child is the school that places more emphasis on everyday aspects, which recalls the idea of home, proposes global contexts, and focuses primarily on experiences lived by the child. Routines and caring aspects (i.e., common meals) are considered important and built into the curriculum, and when activities are proposed, including cognitive ones, this is done within a global approach. The child's day is full of activities that have much to do with everyday life, organization, symbolic play, relationships between peers and between children and adults. Evaluation is also a global concept and not a priority in its traditional formulation.

The apprentice child's school, on the contrary, sees itself as real school, with the main goal to enhance knowledge. It aims at a precise educational and teaching program, and it articulates its activity in more classic curricular terms. It looks at evaluation as a means of keeping a check on the teacher's work.

The Searching Child

The idea of the domestic child is clearly no longer enough if the apprentice's complementary dimension is missing. At the same time, the idea of the apprentice child exposes the nursery school to the limits of an institution aimed only at results, which can fail to recognize the intrinsic value of childhood, and which risks transmitting an established body of knowledge while overlooking the importance

for the child of gaining confidence and producing knowledge himself. The capacity to progressively discover, face, and solve problems seems linked to being given the possibility and having the time needed to mature internally and to work socially. The searching child, offered an environment rich in social, cognitive, and aesthetic opportunities together with the time to explore, play, discuss, and think at his own pace, expressing himself in a hundred languages and evaluated using practices centered on documentation, seems to be an appropriate synthesis of the two current Italian traditions for looking at curriculum as an evolving concept.

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Battista Quinto Borghi

Literacy

In Italy, as in many other places, the term “literacy” entails multiple meanings: from a general and vague familiarity with the written language to the ways through which people gain their abilities to read and to write. In English literature we find the terms of “emergent literacy” or “early literacy” related to the initial and noninstitutionalized approaches to written language. The corresponding Italian words “alfabetizzazione” and “alfabetizzazione iniziale” are slightly different from the English terms because they mainly refer to the mastery of the notational system used for writing, that is, the ability to say and write the letters of a word in the correct order. In fact, these terms are actually acquiring a wider meaning concerning both the children’s ideas and hypotheses about the structure and function of their system of writing and the ways cultural, educative, and familiar contexts promote these processes.

As regards the ways that early childhood education addresses literacy practices in Italy, the situation is very variegated: ranging from direct instruction perspectives, which offer scripted, teacher-directed lessons (charts, guides, assessment handbooks), to child-initiated approaches, which view young children as active constructors of knowledge who are not dependent on didactic instructional cues from a teacher. The historical, intellectual, and cultural conditions that formulated our early childhood curriculum guidelines are based on a holistic approach in which children are seen as social beings who acquire a framework for interpreting experiences through social life. In fact, because the tradition of Italian early childhood education considers the sphere of social interaction between children as the basic learning context for the construction of knowledge, the following statements characterize approaches to written language teaching:

- the development of the individual cannot be understood without taking into account his or her interaction with other people, that is, child learns to write by interacting with people in very different situations and contexts;

- the social environment is itself influenced by the wider culture, that is, the nature and uses of written language are related to specific and varied social conditions and practices.

Considering the first statement, early childhood education has emphasized the importance of social interactions within learning to read and write. This approach leads to the following two concerns:

- a. *Adult-child interaction* in the classroom, in particular the support and stimulation that teachers provide to pupils. In fact, throughout different kinds of techniques, as for example, repeating, reformulating, or asking for an explanation, teachers can encourage pupils to specify and evaluate their working hypotheses, as well as to develop their hypotheses and to find counter examples to test their conclusions. Further, teachers can help their students to approach written language by acting as readers and writers themselves. Teachers who do not write or read cannot sensitively help others learn to write and to read. In this sense particular importance is given to story telling during early childhood, since pleasure in reading is built throughout an affective relation with a meaningful adult. Libraries in preschool, reading spaces in nurseries, and reading activities and proposals for young children in town libraries, have therefore increased in the last years. As regards the role of the teacher as a model of writer, some studies show how writing in front of the pupils is useful for them in order to discover some of the writing system proprieties (such as the direction of writing, the segmentation between the words, the punctuation, etc.), and some of the written language aspects (such as the different kinds of genres). Besides, in the dictation situations, according to the type of text the group is producing (narrative, instructional texts, or letters), pupils develop different kinds of interventions, and this confirms children's textual awareness or sensitiveness.
- b. *Peer interaction*. Several studies report that peer interaction facilitates children's learning in the classroom by delineating those aspects of cooperative learning that are involved in successful arrangements. In general, research suggests that cooperation is most useful for the kind of learning that involves conceptual change. Because learning to write is considered a conceptual learning, the research in this field has showed how the exchange of ideas among children is particularly effective for planning and writing a text, so as to understand the sense of a text when it's read. Construction of knowledge is facilitated when a child tries to put his or her knowledge into relationship with ideas that are at a similar level, because children have points of view that are more or less alike.

Regarding the idea that the social environment is itself influenced by the wider culture, most of the Italian studies conclude that literacy practices should be proposed within authentic communication situations and through the use of real texts. The first point is based on the importance that is assigned to the fact that children should discover the utility, the power, and the pleasure that reading and writing give them. In other words, school should contribute to the development of adults who are linguistically competent, in order to be able to produce an adequate and effective text according to the communication context, that is, citizens of the written culture. Therefore, in classroom approaches the emphasis is put in writing and reading text with clear proposals and real addressees, rather

than writing exercises and skills that are usually not contextualized. The second point is based on the importance that is assigned to exposing children to different genres and types of text and text containers, to encourage them to discover their proprieties and characteristics.

In summary, literacy in Italian preschools is mainly connected with activities related to children's knowledge construction processes, to invented or spontaneous spelling and to spontaneous reading throughout the exchange of ideas among peers and the adults. In these contexts teachers have a significant role because they have to encourage children to exchange points of view among themselves, in order to promote either the revision, the consolidation, or the transformation of their hypothesis without imposing the adult vision of the writing system. At the same time, teachers have to represent the written culture throughout, offering a variety of genres and types of texts, encouraging authentic reading and writing practices and acting as an expert in the written language.

Regarding the research about how children move toward literacy prior to any schooling, most of the Italian studies have looked at how children construct the principles of their writing system within educational contexts. This linked relationship between research and school contexts has provided teachers and curriculum planners with the voice of children, which helps them to understand the possible reasons underlying a particular difficulty in order to clarify the role of errors in the learning processes. The research findings in this field have important educational implications, not only for the design of activities but also for evaluating children's linguistic knowledge.

It was considered central to study the interplay between children's hypotheses about the writing system and the conventional rules of correspondence between phonemes and graphemes or between oral, signed, and written forms in the Italian language. Other studies have noted that young children are content-sensitive, that is, they do not write all the words when they are asked to write down sentences dictated to them. In fact, most young children do not write marks for articles, qualifiers, or even verbs when asked to write full sentences, nor do they "read" or anticipate these categories of words separately when they are asked to "read" a written sentence. They only consider the full nouns, a fact that indicates that children in some moments of early literacy develop sensitivity to the referential meaning of what they represent through writing. In the same direction, a sort of "semantic phase" was demonstrated in response to the request that they write some words and their diminutives (in Italian they are formed by using suffixes that generate words that are always longer compared to the base word although the object referred to is smaller) and plurals (that, although representing a more numerous set, only require a change in the final vowel in spoken and written Italian). The researchers found out that about one-third of the children tried to keep in their writings the similarities of the semantic field of the base word in diminutives and plurals, while changing the dimensions or the order of the marks used in the first case or repeating marks for the plural.

Another dimension studied concerns the children's awareness of or sensitivity to the type or genre of texts they were asked to write down or to read. Two main methodologies have been used within this approach: either the child is asked to dictate his/her text to the researcher, or after the child has written his/her

text, the researcher, hearing what the child verbalizes, rewrites it in conventional writing. The textual awareness was shown in the former approach throughout the content of the text they had just dictated and in the latter approach throughout the differences in the graphic layout children produced as well as in the content of the oral text they elaborated when reading what they had written. These studies have demonstrated that long before children read and write in a conventional way, they are sensitive to certain grammatical, rhetorical, and lexical devices for written language and distinguish between different genres.

These findings suggest that the distinction between the knowledge of the writing system and the knowledge of written language cannot be strictly maintained from the point of view of the child writer. They encourage future approaches that are undertaken within a more integrated vision about both types of knowledge and a more integrated vision about the ways in which genre and writing conventions interplay not only in writing but also in reading.

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Lilia Teruggi

Socioemotional Development

In Italy, the socioemotional aspects of children's experiences in early childhood educational settings are considered an important educational dimension. This attention is due partly to the cultural context within which the early childhood educational services were expanded in the 1960s and 1970s.

Historical Antecedents

First the expansion of the *scuole dell'infanzia* and then the establishment of the *nidi* later was achieved under pressure from the trade union and women's movement, aimed at reconciling child care with women's participation in the

labor market. This historical process has left important traces in the organization of the services managed by the local authorities—and later also by the national authorities—in which different forms of parent participation in the services were introduced, such as their involvement in management aspects (*gestione sociale*) and other social events, such as parties, outings, or discussions regarding educational topics. This historical origin of these educational services also contributed to stimulating discussion of their significance in the life of families and on their impact on the development of the child–mother relationship. In opposition to a psychoanalytical approach, which predicted negative consequences on the establishment of an attachment bond deriving from early separation of the child from the mother, early childhood educational practices stressed the importance of guaranteeing significant relationships between teachers and each child and children’s early social experiences with their peers. These goals translated into some good quality educational practices that spread widely throughout the country and were aimed at sustaining children’s socioemotional development. These practices contributed to characterizing the new services in an innovative perspective compared with previous forms of child care, and to giving them a different educational identity from that of the primary school, which aimed essentially at knowledge acquisition.

The Child–Teacher Relationship

Early childhood pedagogy has had to match itself with two different existing models of the relationship between teachers and children. One model repeats at an early age a type of relationship designed to have the child acquire the social norms or cognitive behavior and motor abilities required for later formal learning. This model has long predominated in the *scuole dell’infanzia*. According to the other model, more widespread in the *nidi*, adults were given a function essentially involving the control and promotion of the physical well-being of the children and substituting for their mothers’ care. In actual educational practice, within both types of service a conception of the adult’s role different from either of these models emerged, according to which the teacher aims at encouraging the children’s process of discovery of the physical and social environment and at supporting them on both the affective and the cognitive levels. Within this perspective, the educational context has to be set up to allow teachers to intervene in the children’s activities in a nondirective way—with concern to communicative style and content. The teacher’s intervention aims to enter the children’s ongoing social and cognitive processes without disrupting them, as well as to guarantee that each child will benefit from her exclusive attention, particularly during physical care. The importance of constructing significant stable relations between children and teachers was also stressed. Both in the *nidi* and in the *scuole dell’infanzia*, the teachers themselves accompany the same group of children throughout the years of their attendance. In the *nidi*, which have a larger teacher’s team, there is a widespread practice of identifying a specific teacher for each child as a reference person for both the child and her/his parents. Discussions and practices involving the relations between children and teachers have

contributed to showing that in the educational settings the children have to cope with a complex social context, which differs from that experienced at home and involves a plurality of adults and children.

Social Contacts with Peers

The attention focused on social contacts with peers received strong support from studies carried out in Italy and other countries in the 1970s and 1980s on children's competence in interacting with peers at an early age. These studies showed that as early as the middle of the first year of life, if children are seated near each other on the rug, they succeed in soliciting reciprocal attention and then in exchanging objects. In the *nidi* it became common practice to place the younger children on a rug with their toys in a position that would favor visual and physical contact among them. Research also showed that toddlers are able to direct social behaviors toward their peers (glances, smiles, motor acts, and utterances), to respond to behavior directed toward them, and to produce relatively long interactive sequences. However, such phenomena can vary greatly according to the quality of the relations between the children and the organization of the context.

Social familiarity, defined as the mutual knowledge of the children based on their repeated meeting, was found to be a basic factor in determining the quantity and quality of children's interactions. In the *nidi* educational practice, this involved providing the children with opportunities to gain knowledge of their reciprocal identities, characteristics, and preferences. Care is taken that, at the time of their first entry to the *nido*, newcomers are introduced to children already attending, and that each child will learn the names of all the other children (e.g., by means of various forms of daily roll call, during which they repeat the names of all the other children, showing interest in the reasons for the absence of certain children, involving telephone calls to the latter's home). When talking to children, the teachers take care to call out the name of each child, to speak of a specific emotional mood or the preferences or requests of an individual child and to make their reasons explicit also to the other children. This support given to mutual knowledge of the peer's identity and emotions has positive effects on the socioemotional climate in the educational context. Even in *nidi* it is frequently possible to observe the development of significant relations among children.

The Importance of Context

Research has also indicated that the frequency and quality of the interaction among children vary as a function of contextual variables such as the number of children present, the number of toys available, the activities prompted by these objects. These findings, together with **Montessori**-based educational suggestions, are strongly echoed in educational practice of both Italian *nidi* and *scuole dell'infanzia*. Two procedures in particular are widespread. The first is that of the arrangement of play areas characterized by a specific theme. These areas are

spatially limited and contain materials suitable for performing specific exploration and play activities. They have a two-fold function: of encouraging the gathering of a small number of children, and of orienting their activities on the same topic, thus favoring sharing among the children. The second procedure, partially related to the first, is to arrange the educational contexts in such a way that the children may often find themselves in small groups during the play and exploration activities. This educational goal affects the service organization at various levels. It is necessary, for instance, to arrange teachers' work schedules so that a greater number of them will be present during the hours of play activity, to organize the environments and play materials to allow and/or favor the division of the children into small groups. A large variety of solutions have been found according to the type of service—*nido* or *scuola dell'infanzia*, its architectural structure, and the number of children attending. It must be stressed that all the solutions are based on the idea that the ratio between the number of teachers and number of children must be evaluated with reference to the quality of the social contexts set up for children. In some cases, as in the educational practice of Pistoia and Reggio Emilia services, teachers aim also to support children's shared activities over time, encouraging their repetition, and the maintenance of their products or other outcomes.

Parent Interests and Attitudes

Parents have also paid increasing attention to the socioemotional aspects of the children's experience in the educational services. Surveys conducted over the past decades in different sites concerning parents' satisfaction with *nido* experience have always shown that they pay particular attention to the relations between teachers and the children. However, providing the children with social experiences with peers has been found to increasingly motivate parents' demand for educational services for toddlers. This demand also includes services that offer only social experiences with peers for just a few hours per day and in the company of the parents. It has been argued that this demand stems from both the large number of only children in Italian families and the positive social experience gained by a growing number of children in the educational services.

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Tullia Musatti

Infant/Toddler Care

Infant/toddler care is provided in Italy mainly by *asili nido*, also called *nidi d'infanzia* (*nido* in Italian means nest). These are educational services for children between the ages of 3 months (when compulsory maternity leave for working mothers generally ends) and 3 years, when nursery school starts. Since 1971 *asili nido* have been run at the city level and planned on a regional basis. They offer a full-time service. The normal school day ranges from 8:00 A.M.–9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. Some children attend only part time and leave after lunch, and extended hours are usually provided at family request between 7:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. In the public settings families pay according to income on a sliding scale.

Italian *asili nido* should not be considered either a “program” for infants and toddlers or mere “day care,” but rather as *educational services for children and families*, where education and care are built into a full daily experience for children that includes routines (meals, sleep, toilet), extended social experiences with peers and adults, and educational opportunities for the development of a child with a strong sense of identity, a progressive autonomy and articulated social and expressive skills.

In recent years many cooperatives, other nonprofit organizations and profit-oriented companies have entered the infant/toddler care scene as a consequence of a steadily growing demand among middle-class families (who were traditionally organizing early childhood care within their homes), the increasing number of working mothers, and the growing number of immigrant families with young children (who are currently about 25 percent of the users of these services in big cities).

Demand for Infant–Toddler Services

National data indicate a figure of 10 percent of children attending this type of care, but the percentage rises to 20–25 percent in the cities of the North and the Center of the country and reaches 30–40 percent in some regions. Demand usually greatly exceeds supply, and therefore in the past five years a growing number of companies has opened *asili nido* for their employees, encouraged by tax cuts and some direct state funding, and many private for-profit settings are popping up. It is generally agreed, however, that public *asili nido* set the quality standards, offering more than the minimum standards required by regional regulations concerning staff qualification, adult/child ratio, space, health, and safety requirements. Adult/child ratio is in general 1/5–1/6 for children between 3 and 12 months and 1/8–1/9 for children between 12 and 36 months. Six/eight square meters are at an average required for each enrolled child as well as special bathrooms, sleep spaces reserved for children, and open playgrounds. Only centers serving less than twelve children are allowed, in some regions, to meet more flexible standards. Centers are usually organized in two or three age groups unless they are very small. Children with special needs and disabilities have priority and their access as well as some regulated forms of parent participation are requirements

for public recognition and funding. Centers that obtain public funding cannot deny access to any child because of family background, ethnicity, religion, or special needs. In the case of special needs the city usually supports the center with extra staff. *Asili nido* are, therefore, conceived as potentially for all children whose families wish or need them.

Staffing

At present (2006), staff is not required to have a postsecondary (college or university) degree. They have either to have attended a high school oriented toward the education and child-care professions or to have an undergraduate degree in education, but the number of well-qualified caregivers is steadily growing and it is likely that the three-year postsecondary degree will soon become compulsory. In-service training is provided on a regular basis—in general 150–200 paid hours per year are foreseen for further training, team meetings, and work with parents. This probably accounts for the widely recognized quality level many city systems of infant/toddler care have attained. At this time infant/toddler centers are usually included in the education department of the municipality and are run in continuity with the municipal nursery schools. In most cities the direction, professional development, and educational planning is under the responsibility of a *coordinatore pedagogico* or *pedagogista*, an expert in education with a postgraduate degree who is generally in charge of a number of centers in the area. These coordinators act as a team in the city or inter-city area, and also supervise private settings that receive public funding, creating a so-called *integrated* system.

Other Types of Services

Since the mid-1980s other forms of infant/toddler care have been first tested and then widely established (law 285, 1998), including mother/toddler centers, part time services, play libraries, family centers with some day-care provision attached to other health or social services, centers especially focussed on immigrant mothers, “bridge” classes for 2-year-olds located in nursery school annexes, etc. The first of these “new” services was *Tempo per le Famiglie* (Time for Families) established in Milan in 1985, then rapidly followed by a number of other experiments in Pistoia, Modena, Rome, etc. A peculiar feature of these flexible services, created to meet a wider range of families with young children and to support early education and parenting in various ways, is that they have appeared and grown as a development of city public services. This has often involved the experienced staff of traditional infant/toddler centers, and thus has contributed to the development and enrichment of the educational network for children and families.

Changing Attitudes Toward Infant/Toddler Care

As in many other countries, ambivalent attitudes greeted the development of full-time educational services for the very young. The question of possible negative effects of attending out-of-home care was raised in the 1970s when

infant/toddler centers were still meant only for working mothers or mothers in need. Gradually, however, the trust of families in the choice of sharing the rearing and education of infants with professionals grew, influenced by the development of an educational concept for early childhood education and expansion of the nursery school experience, by clinical psychology and ecological approaches, and by emerging practices of constant connection between centers and home (the attention given to transition processes and in general to the emotional *benessere* (well-being and well feeling) of children and adults). The increasing attention to the child's emotional and social needs as well as to the parents' needs, doubts and anxieties was a stimulus to the testing and establishment of a very particular set of practices for encouraging and ritualizing a gradual transition into the care setting called *inserimento* or *ambientamento*. Transition lasts in general two weeks, based on the needs of the child and his /her parents, and is officially specified as a routine practice in all municipal guidelines for infant/toddler services.

Whether or not infant/toddler care is good for children is no longer a debate in contemporary Italy, and the extensive research carried out in the United States and in other countries on the topic is viewed with scepticism. First, "effects" seem correlated in many studies with day-care variables not well defined in terms of the quality of the care itself. Which day-care centers produce such effects? How are their transition practices and parent involvement practices designed to build participation and relationships? What is the quality of peer interaction, significant relationships between infants and caregivers, daily routines, space and environment? Scores obtained with different assessment instruments (e.g., Harms, Cryer, Clifford, 1990-tr.it.1992), although interesting as an analysis and training tool for staff, do not seem to be sensitive enough to account for crucial variables in quality. Second, there is a widespread mistrust for research paradigms which emphasize the interest in the longitudinal effects of an experience as complex as daily life in an infant/toddler center ahead of the analysis of the quality and value of childhood *bic et nunc*; that is, which do not take into account context variables such as the alternative choices available to families, the link between centers and community, and the attitudes of parents toward this educational choice. It is felt that these studies are biased and not likely to have a constructive impact on policies.

Demand for early education and care is growing together with the trust toward existing municipal services. Infant/toddler centers are now considered to be well-balanced "daily life contexts" where the children can find a more extended social experience than within the family. The Italian birthrate, at 1.2 children per woman of childbearing age, is one of the lowest in the world, and "only children" are in the majority. With the potential to facilitate development, to foster autonomy and to encourage parents to find advice and support from peers and professionals, infant/toddler centers are increasingly considered the best solution for the care of children under the age of 3. Even middle-class parents declare that they prefer this setting to other forms of private care because it enhances social development and because they trust good professionals. They are prepared to pay rather high fees even in public centers, which can become much higher in the case of private provision even when time schedules are not fully compatible with their working hours. Leaving children in centers for more than eight to nine hours is

in fact strongly discouraged. Parents feel secure about leaving their children in well-supervised, healthy, and safe environments where professional adults have as their specific focus enhancing the well-being of the child, supporting and involving parents, and offering and documenting rich, social, and educational experiences.

Changed and positive attitudes of families and experts toward infant/toddler care outside the family are the result of many factors, including the following:

- the development of the caregiver into a professional and educator and a support and consultant for parents;
- the attention to routines as fundamental opportunities for relationships, sense and control of the bodily functions and opportunity for progressive autonomy;
- the increased knowledge and sensitivity toward the emotional and intellectual needs of young children, the importance of peer relationships and of educational opportunities where exploration and long-lasting cooperative projects are made possible and can be carried out;
- the continuity of care that allows caregiver, children, and parents to invest in relationships that can extend over three years;
- the encouragement and possibility of parent involvement;
- the refinement and flexibility of transition practices;
- the attention to the safety, richness, and aesthetics of the environment;
- the accurate choice and development of diverse materials;
- the importance given to symbolic play and storytelling and the first approaches to art through manipulation of different materials, music and rhythm, and movement;
- documentation as a tool for tracking progress, supporting memory, and making visible children's culture and potential.

Each setting develops its own identity, projects, and materials, but practices, processes, materials, and documentation are widely shared through the contacts within and across the city systems of services. The main network systems are two magazines for professionals (*Bambini, Infanzia*, etc.) and the *Gruppo Nazionale Nidi Infanzia*, an association which had Loris Malaguzzi as first president, which networks through conferences, seminars, publications, and researches but has also developed in an advocacy agency recognized at a national level.

In the past decade the debate over quality and about how to define, assess, and guarantee has stirred the system of early childhood education, and several regions and cities have activated processes of discussion, analysis, and development of instruments and criteria (see the Quality entry, below). National Guidelines setting standards exist only at a local level, accounting in part for the diversity found across settings and municipalities.

Challenges

The current challenges for the system of *asili nido* are numerous. The most critical is pressure for expansion and the high costs push local authorities toward outsourcing and "buying" places from cooperatives or profit centers. Therefore the coordination, control, and guarantee of the same levels of quality is at risk. The development of competent staff requires time and higher qualifications at a time when a strong generational change and turnover is expected. The increasing

number of immigrant children challenges the capacity of the system to face this new form of inclusion and emphasize the crucial role of early childhood services in supporting them as they first approach the community and become active within it. New parents are in a good position for reciprocal recognition, interaction, and the overcoming of prejudice and mistrust if they share with their children a good educational and care experience and are supported by open and experienced staff. This opportunity should not be missed. Italian infant/toddler centers have grown in thirty-five years to be looked at as “good places” potentially for all children. It will be interesting to see whether they can keep the pace with the demands, conflict, and changes of contemporary times.

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Web Sites: www.minori.it www.istitutodeglinnocenti.it

Susanna Mantovani

Parent Involvement

History and Changes Over Time

Home-school relations and parental involvement have been conceptualized in Italian early childhood education as *partecipazione*—a term that implies parents, teachers, children and other members of the community take an active part in the life, culture, and decisions concerning children and the educational services created for them. At its origins, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, *partecipazione* was strictly connected with another term *gestione sociale*, meaning “community-based management.” *Gestione sociale* is the practice of sharing responsibilities in managing institutions and services between caregivers, educators, parents, and other community members. Interpreted as a political principle, it was initially aimed at organizing forms of democratic control of public services by their users. *Gestione sociale* originated in Italy in early childhood services, and then spread and transformed into a more specific but unfortunately an often more bureaucratized form of parent engagement in school life regulated in 1974 by a national law.

Today each infant/toddler center or preschool has a committee or council where families are represented through elections, but the spontaneous participation that was at the origin of many early educational services in the 1960s and 1970s has faded and is only alive in municipal services and in cities where civic and political engagement is strong. Early childhood educational services often emerged from a bottom-up movement. As they became strongly rooted in the community, educators and caregivers began to experiment with various different strategies for involving parents. *Partecipazione* was transformed into

a civic and educational engagement, and involvement of parents in a series of practices that connect home and school and are now a main trait of Italian early childhood education. Originally political, *partecipazione* is still a community matter. It is often the first step of young families into the public and social life of the community, the first contact with public services and their rules, and a potentially effective “playground” for becoming integrated and active community members.

After some years of disengagement and of a stronger demand for more individualized relationships and support, parents seem today to value the opportunity offered by early childhood educational services to meet and build social and friendship networks and to become active in advocating for quality services for their children. Over the years, after the first decade where engagement was at its strongest and early childhood education a hot political issue, *partecipazione* has been spelled out in a more personal sense. This has involved developing the transition practices, individual interviews, parent groups, daily encounters, and common initiatives which can be important opportunities for families, often isolated after the birth of their child, for sharing and discussing the educational issues. Today it can be considered both a pedagogical and a social concept, referring to any process designed to construct a web of human relationships between the family and the school and encompassing practices of communication and sharing responsibilities and practices enacted by caregivers and teachers to involve parents and support them.

Contributing Factors

Early childhood education in Italy is a system with a high degree of continuity in relationships. Children stay in the same preschool with the same caregivers/teachers group for three years, and this encourages a high investment in building and cultivating relationships inside and outside the school (see Infant/Toddler Care entry). When asked, parents and teachers say that the family has the fundamental responsibility for educating children in terms of orienting them to the most important values—moral and/or religious—but school is seen as an important partner and has the fundamental task of creating a context where children can experience and learn sociability and where adults are socialized too and can offer a consistent model. Parents feel that social experience and creative self-expression in play and other languages come first as the most important achievements early educational services should pursue, and cognitive performance ranks only as third priority at this age level. Welcoming children into infant /toddler groups and schools, attuning the transition from home to school, fostering autonomy without interrupting attachment bonds, and creating and supporting a network of relationships among children and parents is therefore considered one of the most important tasks of early childhood educational service, especially for the very young.

The tradition of family participation and involvement which marked the origins of municipal infant-toddler care generated times and spaces and the conceptual basis for developing partnership with parents. Parental involvement is therefore not only one of the major pedagogical axes of the best experiments in early

childhood education—in cities like **Reggio Emilia**, Modena, Pistoia, Parma, Trento, San Miniato, etc.—but also one of the important criteria used today in assessing the quality of early childhood services and in the professional development of teachers. At least four hours are usually devoted by staff per month to meetings and interviews with parents, and it is considered as paid time just as the hours worked with children.

Forms of Parent Involvement

Parental involvement takes the following several forms:

- participation on the elected board (*comitato di gestione*) which participates in decisions about access, waiting lists, and expenditures;
- daily communication between parents and teachers during drop-off and pick-up time. Most infant/toddler centers have a special place where parents can sit with their children or among themselves when arriving and before leaving;
- practices and rituals for gradually transitioning the child and his /her parents into the center (*inserimento*);
- regular interviews and group meetings to share ideas on education, life with children, and school projects;
- informal meetings on special occasions (Christmas, Carnival, end of the year, open days, etc).

The relationship with the family begins even before the real entrance of the child into child care. Once the child has been accepted, parents are invited to visit the center in the presence of other children so that they get familiarized with the center's environment by observing them go through their daily schedule. Meetings with other new and old parents are then organized and this is the first opportunity for interaction among families, children, teachers, and the environment of the center. Before the child enters the center individual interviews with parents are carried out to establish a dialogue between parents and teachers, so that they begin to know each other and set the basis for mutual trust. Parents narrate their child's daily life and provide the caregiver with basic information regarding the child's habits. Taking care of a baby or a young child is a very intimate matter. Emotions and ambivalences involved in the first experiences of parting and sharing can be very strong and the parents should feel that teachers are aware of their natural anxiety, accept it, and are at the same time experts and in control. The underlying message is: "This is your child, you know how she/he is, we need your knowledge and experience to understand who he/she is and create for him/her the best opportunities." Before the beginning of the school year, there might be another meeting to decide the organization and the plan for the gradual transition process, which lasts generally two weeks in infant/toddler centers and one week in schools for children aged 3–6.

Inserimento consists of a set of predictable strategies for getting to know each other that involves teachers, parents, and children. It is a gradual process of becoming familiar with a new community for the child along with his or her accompanying parent, the caregiver, other parents, and their children. It serves two primary goals: facilitating an active adjustment of the child in the new setting and a strong connection or alliance with the families; and fostering parents' involvement and participation in the early experience of the child in the center as a first important step for further involvement.

Inserimento is aimed at giving children the opportunity to explore the new environment with their parents, to practice brief separations, to get gradually in touch with new adults and to feel secure. Parents, for their part, have a chance to know the environment where their children will spend so much time, its routines, and convivial moments. Teachers have the rare opportunity to observe children in interaction with their parents, discovering the interactional styles of each pair and to getting to know the child without the strong protests of sudden separations. This privilege will not last forever, but it gives young children an initial feeling of familiarity and emotional security that usually carries over when the parent is no longer present. While the caregiver gradually takes over responsibility, the parent is personally involved in facilitating and supporting his/her child and feels active and useful.

Inserimento is a common practice in infant/toddler centers and in municipal preschools and parents are seriously invited to spend as much time as possible in the center on the occasion of the first entrance of their child into the new community. As the child will gradually experiment with an increasing distance (both physical and emotional) from his parents, parents will benefit from the opportunity to observe their child's exploration of the new setting and they will also take their time to get to know the teacher and other parents.

Daily communication is also considered important and it develops through encounters that occur every day between teachers and parents. Informal communication between parents and teachers takes place daily. Individual interviews and meetings relating to the specific experience of each child can be requested either by the school or by the family. Family members are involved in decisions about their children and are encouraged to be active protagonists of their child's life at the center. Documentation and display on the walls shows what children can do and elicits more questions and active interest from the parents.

There is no doubt that friendly and balanced relationships between parents and teachers improve the child's well-being and his or her growth. Teachers are also aware that welcoming a child into the child-care setting also implies an important investment in the relationships with parents and can become a significant way to support parents in their responsibilities and apprenticeship as educators, making them feel active, important, and empowered. This task takes maturity and specific professional development, which is fairly well established in most municipal infant/toddler centers but still not fully developed in preschools, especially where an exclusive focus on curricular matters can hide the strong emotions and the need for support involved in the first sorties of the child out of the family circle.

Continuity of care in educational services and in school and links between school and families are basic assumptions in the Italian interpretation and practices of early childhood education. This idea of continuity works together with the notion of complementarity between the experience of growing and being educated at home and in the out-of-home settings. The interpretation of "good practices" in the education of young children is seen as resulting from dynamic interactions between all the adults involved in this process. Finally, infant toddler/centers and preschools are interpreted as relational systems where both children and adults are formally initiated into an organized community and where

parents and teachers can practice shared responsibilities in a society that tends to isolate families.

Challenges

Whether or not involving parents in the child's growth ensures high quality early childhood or good experiences for children in early childhood settings is not in question. Research and experience give evidence of the importance of these practices and attitudes in working with young children. The fast changing educational models and representations of children, their development in an accelerated and global society, and a growing pressure for early performance are forces that might erode the good, relaxed time to practice and experience new relationships. Intimacy and distance are new challenges threatening a thus far balanced model. It is also a challenge figuring out how best to engage the growing number of families from different cultural and national backgrounds. These families bring with them, within the universal expectations of the best for their youngsters, different ways of understanding and experiencing educational responsibilities, interdependence and autonomy, and community life. Early childhood educational services can thus be a crucial opportunity either for a feeling of belonging or a first experience of exclusion. Cultural understanding, communicational skills, and a strong professional commitment need to be developed in early childhood educators in order that they be able to face these challenges and to conceive, propose, negotiate, and make possible renewed forms of *partecipazione*.

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Chiara Bove

Teacher Training

In Italian the concept and the word used for teacher's "training" is *formazione*. This word conveys a very different meaning from the English word "training." The concept comes from *forma* (structure, to shape) and is intended in the sense of

taking form rather than being given a form. The concept underlying the word training is better translated with the word *addestramento*, a series of practices that can be operationalized as used in sports or in training animals, or in the technical part of the preparation of an artist or a professional. Italian teachers would resent the very idea of being “trained” instead of “formed.”

An Evolving System

The qualification of teachers for *scuole dell'infanzia* (schools for children aged 3–6) and of caregivers for *asili nido* (infant and toddler centers), both called *educatrici* (educators) rather than *insegnanti* (teachers), changed very little until 1998. These students attended special high schools for teachers or, for professionals who intended to work only in the infant and toddler centers, a high school for caregivers (*puericultrici*) oriented on health and care rather than education.

Beginning in the 1980s many caregivers attended universities after their high school and obtained a four-year degree in *Scienze dell'educazione* (Educational Sciences), often while working. Although this degree was optional for caregivers, it was required for directors and coordinators of social and educational early childhood services (often called *pedagogisti*).

Since 1998, the requirement for teachers of *scuola dell'infanzia* is a four-year degree in *Scienze della Formazione Primaria*, a course preparing both preschool and primary school teachers with a common curriculum in the first two years and a specific curriculum in the following two years.

In 1999, the University system was reformed in accordance with European agreements, and is now organized in a three-year level (*laurea*) and a two-year postgraduate level (*aurea magistrale*). At present (2006), at the national level *educatrici* for infant and toddler centers are not required to have postsecondary training. But in many cases educators in service have attended a three-year course in educational sciences, which in some cases gives them priority in the “point basis” hiring system common in public services. Coordinators of early childhood services are now always required to have at least a three-year degree (for infant and toddler centers) and a four- or five-year degree for *scuola dell'infanzia*.

Beginning in 2007 the four-year course for preschool teachers should be extended to five years—the so called 3+2—as will be the case for all teachers at every school level. The trend for *educatrici* in charge of children under the age of 3 is to require the three-year course that is the basis for the further training of preschool teachers, thereby reestablishing the possibility of continuity and career development. Some cities and regions resist this trend for fear that it will lead to higher salaries and to keep the staff of infant toddler centers at the same level as family day-care staff.

The Professional Profile

The basic ideas underlying the training processes activated by the new courses provide a profile of a professional capable of translating multidisciplinary knowledge (*cultura generale*) into teaching practices that can be adapted to different

environments, changing social features and family patterns, specific attitudes, and the cognitive styles, characteristics and cultural backgrounds of the children. Teachers should aim to make children capable of learning how to learn. The teacher is expected both to integrate within herself/himself and to activate in the children emotional, cognitive and social resources, and curiosity and pleasure in learning. The proposals for the new curriculum emphasize the following five areas of competence:

- *Disciplinary*: well grounded in general and specific knowledge and the capacity to translate them in inspiring teaching;
- *Methodological*: the capacity to observe, document, and support the progression of learning through specific teaching strategies;
- *Communicational*: the capacity to involve children in their work through group work, active participation, mutual help, coconstructed practices including new languages, and the new communication technologies;
- *Managerial and organizational*: specifically related to the creation of the interpersonal and learning environment;
- *Ethical*: the capacity to face the many dilemmas of the teaching profession, co-constructing common rules, working to overcome prejudices and discrimination, trying to develop in the school community a sense of responsibility, solidarity, and social justice.

The Curriculum

This first experiment at university courses for early childhood professionals is characterized by the following:

- a *multidisciplinary approach*;
- a curriculum where theory and practice are *integrated*; and
- a *partnership with schools*.

The curriculum is *multidisciplinary* in several different respects. First, the school systems containing preschool and primary school-teachers are in continuity with one another—with an extra year a preschool teacher can also get a degree valid for primary school and vice versa. Second, there is a balance in the teacher preparation program between human sciences (education, psychology, sociology, anthropology) and curricular disciplines (languages, history, geography, mathematics, sciences, art, music, etc.). Third, in *scuola dell'infanzia* and in primary school the Italian system foresees a teacher that stays with his/her class for several years (three years in *scuola dell'infanzia*, five years for at least one teacher in primary school) and who can teach all subjects. Even teachers who are going to work with children with special needs first have to go through the basic four-year course.

The curriculum is *integrated* in the sense that traditional lecturing is combined with laboratories where students are split into small groups (lectures have enrollments ranging from 30 to 200 students). In these smaller groups, starting in the first year, students practice experiential learning and simulations of what they will be doing in the child-care settings and in schools. During the field practice (called *tirocinio*), which are supervised in small groups, the students observe in a first phase, cooperate with the class teachers in a second phase, and take direct responsibility in the third phase.

The curriculum is carried out in *partnership with the schools* because each university to which the Ministry of Education assigns teacher training programs—one or two in each region according to resources and number of teachers needed—is supposed to get in touch with schools in the entire area. These universities can count on the fact that some teachers and school principals, temporarily detached in the university and in collaboration with university faculty, will work part time for the program to supervise the laboratory and *tirocinio* activities.

At the end of the program the students take a final exam where they present and discuss a research paper they have written under the guidance both of their supervising school-teacher and of a member of the faculty in front of a committee appointed by the university and by the Regional Bureau of the ministry of education and this qualifies them to teach in any public or private school. Public schools are required to hire qualified teachers, and private or municipal schools must do so if they want to be considered *scuole paritarie*, that is, schools recognized by the ministry and thus eligible for financial support.

This experiment is the first ever organized in Italy on a large basis where university and schools are systematically working together. Preliminary findings indicate that it is being received with mutual satisfaction and mutual advantage. There are of course problems. First, many think that a jump from no postsecondary training at all to four and soon five years is too abrupt and maybe even too much. Second, a certain mistrust needs to be overcome on both sides. On the one hand, schools think universities are too distant and too abstract from the daily problems and challenges of real teaching. On the other, universities are not so familiar with working on an equal basis with teachers and getting “hands dirty” in the field beyond “clean” research practices. But the first eight years of the experiment are in general considered satisfactory, and many unexpected practices have come about. These include courses offered by universities for the teachers in the schools agreeing to assist with the *tirocinio*, themes of interest to the schools proposed for the documentation or research work leading to the final papers by the students, regular meetings to discuss school reform and new programs, and coconstructed in-service training activities. For all these reasons the upcoming change that will transform the now well-established four-year program into the five year—three plus two—curriculum, where the activities in partnership with the schools will be mainly concentrated in the last two years, is looked at with a certain apprehension.

Training Teachers for Children with Special Needs

Teachers who intend to work as an extra teacher in classes with children with special needs have to complete their four-year course, which includes special education and at least one other course on disabilities, and then take an additional program, lasting from one semester to one year, which qualifies them for this specialized task. The Italian system is inclusive, and all children with special needs, no matter how serious, are included. The special teacher is supposed to be a support to the class, and specific rehabilitation takes place, if necessary, out of school. One drawback is that because positions for teachers trained for special needs are numerous, many students specialize and get into the job primarily as a way of entering the profession rather than as a real choice.

Professional Development

Before the 1998 program started, the main training responsibilities for early childhood educators were carried out by municipalities, and to a lesser extent by the state system (*Servizio Nazionale per la Scuola Materna*) through in-service training. This accounts for the large amount of time (150 to 200 paid hours per year) that has traditionally been built into the contract for training, teamwork and work with parents. This training has usually been planned on a yearly basis, combining activities and courses offered in response to specific staff requests with other activities planned at city level to foster specific skills, or to give a common foundation to staff, or to pursue special projects. Group work and supervision, action research experiences monitored by researchers, and altogether a strong focus on the context, combined with considerable freedom in choosing courses linked to the specific talents of individual educators (in art, photography, drama, science, etc.) have characterized the best known high-quality experiences like **Reggio Emilia**.

The new regulations for teachers training encourage the link between universities, local authorities, research and training centers such as INDIRE (*Istituto Nazionale per la Documentazione e la Ricerca Educativa*) specialized in e-learning and e-training, INVALSI (*Istituto Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema Scolastico Italiano*) for evaluation and assessment, and the various regional institutes (*Istituti Regionali per la Ricerca Educativa*). This will be advantageous for cities which did not have the resources or the expertise for organising professional development activities, but it might encourage other municipalities with histories of being strongly engaged in fostering professional development reduce that investment when resources become scarce. The outstanding Italian experiences such as Reggio Emilia, Pistoia, Modena, Parma, Milano, Bologna, and Trento have always been grounded in a strong community-based training, which probably accounts for the richness and creativity of these programs, so it would be a great loss if the local efforts and resources to implement ECEC services should be reduced or totally reshaped.

Challenges

The past decade has brought about deep changes—not yet well understood and evaluated—in the standards, expectations, and rationale of the training process for teachers and caregivers. If on the one hand they give greater dignity to the preschool teachers, on the other hand they exclude the educators of the very young from the public education school system, contradicting a well-established tradition of continuity and exchange between *asili nido* and *scuola dell'infanzia* and exposing *asili nido* to the risk to be pushed back to mere care.

Even if everybody agrees that the cultural background of the preschool teacher has to be stronger, the risk is that this professional comes to look at the school for the children from 3 to 6 in a more formalized and schoolish way, and in so doing denies the best tradition of the holistic approach that characterizes the Italian tradition (see Pedagogy and Curriculum entries). Having a curriculum in common with primary school-teachers might orient new ECE teachers in a different way

and interrupt the continuity and exchange with the professionals working with the 0- to 3-year-olds.

The Italian system for the very young children has grown over the years with a continuous professional development because of the poor basic training of these early childhood professionals. This huge investment by local authorities has brought about habits of group work, active learning processes, action research experiences, contacts and exchanges with universities and research centers, and a constant adjustment of the professional tools to the community and the changing society. It would be a pity and a loss if the new university curriculum (which certainly strengthens the professional self-image and social role) would have as a consequence a strong reduction of time and resources for professional development.

Italy was confronted with the paradox that the level of its school system considered the best in international comparisons—early childhood education—was the one where the teachers had the lowest basic and academic training. We still do not know if the new system will be able to provide the professionals needed for ECEC with the knowledge, the attitudes, and the skills necessary to maintain and extend the good job done so far by dedicated teachers, who are child, family, and community oriented and always ready to learn more and in new ways. A new balance between basic training and professional development is crucial; good educators have to be well formed and cultivated. But they are not specialists or experts on single subjects or problems: rather they are professionals of everyday life, capable of interacting with parents, to support them by sharing the responsibilities of growing and educating their children, to look at the children as whole persons in specific and changing environments or ecological niches, to help them find many ways and languages to express themselves and develop. Early childhood education is a profession too complex and too delicate to be confined within a standardized and centralized curriculum, and too important for establishing a culture of childhood not to deserve a strong societal investment right from the beginning.

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Web Sites: www.indire.it; www.cede.it

Elisabetta Nigris

Public Policies

Public policies aimed at the development of educational institutions for early childhood were specified for the first time in 1968 for *scuole dell'infanzia* (3-6) with Act 444, which instituted state schools on a national level where these services were provided by the church, by municipalities and, on a very small scale,

by private organizations. The national policies for services to younger children, *asili nido* (0–3), began with Act N.1044 in 1971; previously the only state intervention was confined to crèches for children in need through an organization set up during the fascist years in the 1920s called ONMI (*Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia*).

Since 1968 *scuole dell'infanzia* have been progressively expanded and built within the general educational system. Although not compulsory, they are now attended by the large majority of children (over 90% of five-year-olds in 2005). Recent law reforming the school system (Act 23, 2003) states that *scuole dell'infanzia* will be guaranteed to all children. The 1968 bill ruled that the State should intervene where the municipal or private system was not sufficient, and foresaw state support for municipal and private schools. Since then state direct involvement has grown, especially in the South and in rural areas where the municipal and church traditions were weaker. Today (2006) about 50 percent of all *scuole dell'infanzia* are state schools. There is little or no discussion about policies to expand and support these schools and it is assumed by all political parties that it is a state responsibility to complete the coverage quickly and to maintain good standards.

Policies Related to Services for 0- to 3-Year-Olds

Public policies for *asili nido* (0–3) have always been more controversial, and although today there is a strong consensus about the educational character of these services and a general request for more of them, their development is still far from being satisfactory. The 1971 law was mainly conceived to provide women easier access to work within the framework of a broad welfare system where long maternity leaves were also granted. The 1044 law was undoubtedly the first step in orienting public policies toward the development of educational services for young children. These services were identified as social services of public interest, which involved providing for financial support from the state to regional and municipal authorities to cover both investment costs and a large portion of management costs.

The plan, involving the development of a nationwide network of 3,800 *asili nido* over five years, faced a social context in which sharing educational responsibilities between families and educational services was not yet generally felt as natural and positive. Perhaps chiefly for this reason, the plan met with different levels of acceptance depending on the different local cultures in the country.

Thus, while the development of services in the different areas provided a highly differentiated picture, with a strong concentration in the northern-central parts of the country, two general events took place that were of critical importance in view of further developments in the service system:

- the potential drive to development provided by the national fund set up at the beginning of the 1970s came to an end by statute (Act n. 448) in December, 1988;
- starting at the end of 1983 crèches were no longer qualified as “services of public interest,” and instead, they were usually included in the so-called “services on individual demand,” with part of the cost to be charged to users.

Starting in the mid-1980s a long cycle began, which still continues, in which shaping a broad political scheme *on a national level* for the development of educational services for young children has proven consistently difficult. Over the same period, the efforts of many families and many municipalities toward updating national rules and regulations and reactivating the development of an educational system for children has led to the advancement of a few legal policy proposals originated at the grassroot level (*leggi di iniziativa popolare*), which have, however, never managed to capture enough attention on the part of the Parliament to be approved.

General Policy Trends

Despite the lack of attention on a national level to the issue of policies for children, the service system has followed a number of recognizable developmental trends in those northern-central areas where higher levels of development have been recorded. These trends are as follows:

- the longer-established experience of crèches has generated “new types” of services meant to welcome children or children with parents/with relatives for regular attendance more than once a week (see Infants and Toddlers entry);
- connections and synergies between municipal authorities and cooperatives and other nonprofit organizations have led to a progressive differentiation of the human resources involved in the system as activators and/or managers of educational services.
- the responsibility, and the cost, of development for this growing service system, which has gone from 2000 facilities at the end of the 1980s to the 4000 currently operating, has increased its potential for coverage from 6 percent to about 10 percent of potential users nationwide.

Distinguishing National, Regional, and Municipal Roles

The increase in coverage and quality is largely to be ascribed to the policies developed at a municipal level, partially with the financial support of Regional Authorities and in synergy with the cooperative movement. The very “regional” and “local” character, that had been negatively characterized during the partial and highly differentiated implementation of the National Plan put forward with Law 1044-1971, is pivotal to local and/or regional experiences, which have, over time, reached meaningful quantitative targets (with local peaks of over 40% coverage), getting at the same time very deeply rooted into the public policies of local communities and regional governments.

The very synergy between Municipalities and the cooperative movement in jointly supporting the development of an educational service system—often simplistically interpreted in the past as a mere money-saving device for public authorities—has taken on the connotation of a general strategy, which has further substantiated and strengthened the role of the public player. This has resulted in a fuller recognition of public responsibility for system governance and regulation, and enhanced the value, through adequate orientation and control strategies, of

private contributions, which already fall within the framework of public interest, coming as they do from nonprofit organizations pursuing social goals.

Today we are in a position to evaluate how other functions concerning system governance and regulation as well as advanced design and management skills can be—and in fact are—the ground upon which Municipalities and the cooperative movement can meet and jointly lead the development of an integrated service system offering children and families greater access and quality.

At this stage it is worth mentioning that in more recent years there have been a few central measures aimed at the development of service policies:

- Law N. 285 (August, 1997) provided financial support to actions addressed to children and adolescents, limiting its scope to additional services for crèches (play areas and centers for children and parents) in the field of educational services for early childhood.
- State Financial Laws for 2002 and 2003 (Law N. 448 of December 21, 2001, and Law 289 of December 2002) provided for financial support “to build and manage crèches and micro-crèches in working environments.”

These provisions, although they have contributed to a local extension of services, lack a general view of a national integrated system.

The debate on the constitutional organization of the State oriented to strengthen federalism and decentralized action defines a new profile for national rules and regulations, which is supposed not to clash with the broader powers ascribed to regional parliaments. Although the emphasis on regional responsibility corresponds to the development of early childhood services, the diversity of the country in terms of resources, municipal traditions, and effectiveness of management experiences worries associations and other parties who advocate for early childhood education, which try to promote a concept of “federalism in solidarity.”

The present political scene is confused. It is widely felt that some kind of new balance needs to be pursued among:

- state competences concerning the basic level of services, relating to civil and social rights, which have to be granted in any part of the country;
- adequate measures to ensure that the required resources for achieving and maintaining such “basic levels” are identified;
- the possibility, above those levels, to design implementation based on local and regional needs and experiences.

Recent statements on the part of the Supreme Court (*Corte Costituzionale*), in highlighting the above perspective, state clearly the educational character of crèches and other services for early childhood, and suggest that these should fall within the area of education in terms of government competences (thus confirming the prevailing trends on a regional and local level that emerged in the previous decades).

Major emphasis is being placed on working out an updated framework in terms of rules and regulations—integrated with consistent ongoing development plans supported by adequate funding—which may foster the growth of the service system in the medium/long term. Only by taking this perspective will we be able to consolidate basic service levels in the whole country while confirming and enhancing the relevance ascribed to regional and local levels in planning and implementing educational efforts.

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Aldo Fortunati

Japan

Early Childhood Education in Japan

Introduction

In some sixteenth- and nineteenth-century essays, European authors remarked that Japanese society was paradise for young children. Young children were cherished, full of energy, and free. Although the authors neglected the tragedies of children living in poverty and a patriarchic family system, it was true that many children were cherished by members of extended families and looked after by people in their community. Traditional views of children supported the belief that the child was the gift of gods, born with good nature, and in the realm of gods until the age of 7. Adults needed to protect children from evil influences so that they could develop their own innate good nature. Mothers were responsible for raising their children to become respectable adults. A mother's role was important in another sense, especially in the upper class; she was responsible for raising the first boy to excel as the successor in the patriarchic family system.

Transmission of Traditional Culture

Early childhood education has taken over the family's role regarding cultural transmission. Japanese people had many traditional festivals following each season, from New Year's Day to the end of the year. Children have prominent roles in many festivals originated in Shintoism, because they have been thought to be children of gods. In many festivals originating in agriculture, there have been special events for children. These ceremonies have been celebrated in both families and communities. Today, while most of these customs are lost in families, kindergartens and day-care centers celebrate these customs and apply them in educational practices. Some traditional play activities that are no longer popular in families are also practiced in preschool education. Thus, kindergartens and day-care centers have assumed the role of transmission of traditional culture (see also the Cultural Characteristics of Japanese Preschool Education).

Brief History of Japanese Early Childhood Education and Care

The first kindergarten was founded in the late nineteenth century for children of the upper-middle class. Teachers were women of upper-middle class who had been trained at the first teacher training school for women. This training school, Tokyo Women's Teacher's College, was founded in 1874, opened its kindergarten in 1876, and established the training course for kindergarten teachers in 1878. Its educational theory and practices were established by Sozo Kurahashi, a professor at the College.

The first day-care centers were also opened in the late nineteenth century in the countryside for children of farmers and workers. Several years later, the first day-care center in an urban area was created in Tokyo for poor children of working-class mothers. Teachers at this center were also graduates of the Tokyo Women's Teacher's College—highly educated women with progressive ideas. As a result, the development of day-care centers became a social movement to save poor families. Intellectuals, volunteers, educators, and child psychologists played an active role in improving the educational practices of these programs.

These historical streams show that, from the beginning, both kindergartens and day-care centers had professionals of high quality and people contributing to their creation and improvement. After complete destruction in World War II, the dual system was reconstructed in 1948 with establishment of its legal basis. Since then, the education guidelines for kindergarten have been revised four times, providing an historical record of the changes in national policy about early childhood education and care during the second half of the twentieth century (see Pedagogy in Japan).

Characteristics of Japanese Early Childhood Education and Care

Sozo Kurahashi's theory has always been one core of Japanese preschool education. (see Pedagogy entry, below). Some characteristics of modern early childhood education and care can be traced directly to him, while others are the outcomes of social changes.

“Hoiku”—care and education for humanity. The expression “education and care (*hoiku* in Japanese)” is usually used in Japanese kindergartens and day-care centers. The meaning of “Hoiku” includes fostering personality, sensibility, emotion, motivation, human relationships, and health; that is, the basis of humanity rather than the teaching of knowledge and skills. This principle is presented in Kurahashi's theory of “education by inducement.” The word “hoiku” is distinguished from education in school (“*kyoiku*”). While the word “kyoiku” is rarely used in day-care centers, it is used as “preschool education (*yoji-kyoiku* in Japanese)” in kindergartens, which legally belong to the school system. The use of *kyoiku* in kindergarten is controversial. In one aspect, kindergarten education has a uniqueness that distinguishes it from school education. On the other hand, continuity with preparation for elementary school is stressed. This contradiction contributes to the diversity of educational practices found among kindergartens.

Social change after world war II. The political and social contexts greatly changed after World War II. As a relatively monocultural society, this change was mainly caused by the innovation of social systems and economic growth. Social systems changed family and community. Both traditional extended families and neighborhood community disappeared. Today, mothers raise their children in a nuclear family without the help of grandmothers or their neighbors. Economic development has dramatically decreased child mortality (infant mortality rate is 3.2 and mortality rate under age 5 is 4 per 1000 births). The most drastic change is the decline of fertility.

Early Childhood Development Programming

Today, many Japanese children under the age of 3 are looked after by their mothers during the daytime. The enrollment rate of children under 3 years old in day-care centers is 21 percent (1999). Nine percent of 3-year-old children attend kindergartens and 30 percent of them attend day-care centers. At age 5, 83 percent of children participate in collective education (48% at kindergarten and 35% at day-care centers). Almost all 5- to 6-years-old children receive preschool education (60% at kindergartens and 39 % at day-care centers) before entering elementary schools. Elementary school is obligatory for children from 6 to 12 years old.

Early childhood education in Japan has two systems, kindergarten and day care. Kindergartens are operated under the School Education Law, and accept children from 3 to 6 years of age for four hours a day more than 39 weeks a year. The kindergarten education guidelines (National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens) issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) regulate the objectives and contents of kindergarten education, although private kindergartens are not required to follow them completely. Parents can choose either the two-year course (from 4 to 6 years old) or the three-year course (from 3 to 6 years old), and more and more parents choose the three-year course. The teacher/child ratio is at most 1:35. Kindergarten teachers are trained for more than two years after high school to get the kindergarten teaching license. Of the 13949 kindergartens countrywide, 60 percent are private and 40 percent are public (2005, MEXT).

The second system is the day-care center. In Japan, day-care centers are legally a social institution based on the Child Welfare Law and operated under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare and Labor. Day-care centers accept children from three months (after maternity leave) to 6 years of age whose parents cannot take care of them during the daytime because of work or illness. Day-care centers are normally open from 7:30-8:30 in the morning until 6:00-7:00 in the evening. The Day Care Education and Care Guidelines provide the framework for the curriculum, although for children 3- to 6 years old the kindergarten guidelines are applied. In order to obtain a license professional day-care providers also must receive training for two years after high school. The adult/child ratio is 1:3 for children less than 12 months old, 1:6 for 1 and 2-year-old classes, 1:20 for the 3-year-old class, 1:30 for classes of 4- and 5-year-olds. There were 22,490 centers with 2,028,045 places in 2004 (Ministry of Health and Labor). Fifty six percent of

all the day-care centers are administrated by local government and the remainder are private.

Although unification of these two systems for children aged 3 to 6 has been discussed several times since 1945, the two systems remain separate and each belongs to a different ministry. Recently, however, a third system, the “comprehensive educational facility,” has been created. This system combines the day-care center and the kindergarten and allows various styles of care and education in one institution.

The Five Content Domains of Early Education

Japanese preschool education focuses on five areas of study: health, language, expression, human relationships, and environment. The objectives of preschool education are not to attain goals but to encourage motivation or inclination. In the Guidelines, for example, we see emphasis on objectives such as “a child *enjoys*,” “a child is *interested* in,” “a child *tries* to . . . ,” “a child *feels*” etc.

Education Through Play and Environment

Indirect instruction is one of the particularities of Japanese early childhood education. The Japanese believe that the best way to accomplish the objectives of preschool education is through play, where teachers support children so that they can develop by themselves. This is called, “education through the environment,” “education through play,” or “child-centered education” (see Curriculum and Play entries, below).

The theory of “education through the environment” has been accepted not only in collective education but also in family education. Literacy provides an example. Japanese language has three systems of characters: abundant Chinese ideograms (*Kanji*), and phonemes such as 55 *Hiraganas* and 55 *Katakanas*. It looks complicated, but in fact, it is not so difficult to engage young children in literacy initiatives. In fact, young children are easily attracted by letters, because simple ideograms look like drawings and phonemes have one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound. Children are often motivated to ask adults how letters can be read and what they mean. If adults are responsive to their questions, children can acquire basic literacy by themselves. Parents who emphasize this indirect education motivate their children by making use of their surroundings.

Since the 1960s, with Japan’s growth as a worldwide economic power, a social trend valuing the advantages of intellectual learning has prevailed. Parents expect their children to obtain an advantageous position in society, and insist that kindergartens teach intellectual skills directly. It is not surprising that many kindergartens and day-care centers, especially private ones, respond to parental pressure by giving instruction in, for example, literacy, numeracy, physical training and exercise, and instrumental music. Even though “education through environment” is thought to be an ideal theory, parents prefer practical outcomes that prepare children directly for elementary school studies. Many other kindergartens and day-care centers are wavering between these two modes of education.

Early Development and the Family

Some studies show that many young mothers who are isolated in a nuclear family feel that their child-rearing is a burden. These women receive abundant information on child-rearing from TV, magazines, or books, but they often have no one with whom to discuss their concerns or ask for advice. Many young mothers confess that they want to be excellent mothers but feel guilty that they are not achieving this goal. Despite this concern, social support systems to replace traditional community have not been organized until recently, when local governments have attempted to address this lack of support with a new system of services for mothers. These services offer advice, opportunities to meet and talk with other young mothers, and provide facilities or interaction with other parent and children (see Family Involvement and Infants and Toddlers).

Children as Targets of Commercialism

Japanese economic growth has brought an increase in child-targeted industry. Family education has been impacted by this increase in commercialism. With one or two children in a family, a child has “six pockets” (two parents and four grandparents). Various child-focused industries promote the message that parents should spend money on their children. These industries encourage parents to take their children to various lessons (English language, computer, piano, swimming, dance, etc.), and claim to give the children intellectual training through the sale of educational materials, including computer games. These children are often too busy attending extra lessons to find time for playing with other children.

Risk Avoidance

In a society of low fertility, a child’s life is extremely precious for parents. Parents are nervous about their child’s safety, and careful to avoid risks in order to prevent accidents. Kindergarten and day-care teachers are also very careful to make sure that children have little risk of hurting themselves, for fear that parents will blame them for an accident. This tendency leads to overprotection of children both by parents and teachers. Because both teachers and parents are trying to avoid any possible accidents, children are deprived of adventurous activities, struggles with other children, and the use of dangerous tools. As a result, children are likely to miss the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to manage challenging situations.

Children and Outdoor Play

Children used to play in the neighborhood with other children of different ages, where they learned social rules and skills from older children. Today, there are few occasions for children to play outdoors with their peers. In urban areas little outdoor space is available where children can play safely without paying attention to the cars. Older children are often busy after school and are not able to take care of the younger ones while they play. As a result, children prefer to

play with computer games instead of playing outdoors. When a crime against a child is committed somewhere in Japan and is then reported on TV, parents feel afraid to let their child play outdoors. These phenomena prevent children from acquiring necessary social skills for their development.

Social Pathology and Children

In every society, young children are most likely the victims of social pathology. Although the number of reported cases in Japan is less than that of many other developed countries, there is an increasing problem of mothers mistreating their children. Japanese mothers feel pressure to be good mothers. Their feelings of discrepancy between the ideal and reality, both about themselves and their children, cause anxiety and lead some mothers to neglect their children.

Another topic often discussed is the increase of children with behavioral disorders; for example, an increase in the number of schoolchildren who cannot stay calm in classrooms, children who become aggressive without good reason, or children without concern for others.

In contemporary Japanese society children are valued in the sense that parents spend more time and money on their children with greater interest and concern than parents did in 1950s (when they had many children and spent most of their time working to support their families). However, children today are treated more as possessions of parents, objects of marketing, and future participants in the worldwide competition called globalism. Children are encouraged to adapt themselves to the outside world, but are less sensitive either to their own or others' inner world. Children are not isolated from today's world of war and discrimination, and they are certainly influenced by a world in which power and violence dominate, even if they are not its immediate victims. We adults face the challenge of cooperating in an international context to provide children with societies in which they can lead happy and productive lives.

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Miwako Hoshi-Watanabe

Cultural Characteristics of Japanese Preschool Education

Japan is not an obviously multiracial or multicultural society, confronted with problems of maintaining the ethnicity of minority groups. Although it is not, in reality, a country of homogenous race, the preoccupation with the "homogeneity of Japanese culture" evident among Japanese is found in Japanese education.

Japanese cultural characteristics penetrate various aspects of early child education. Also, the transmission of Japanese traditional culture is seen in educational programs.

The Traditional Concept of Children

There is an old saying in Japan that children under the age of 7 are still in God's hands. This means that children under the age of 7 are not considered the objects of purity or impurity. Their souls should be placed in the territory of God and should be free from every constraint to resurrect their soul. Ethnological religions do not believe it is a good idea to place children under 7 years old in the control of Buddhism. The 7-year-olds celebration is considered to be a ceremony celebrating the first step in the process of transition into adulthood.

The Celebration of 7, 5, 3

There still remain many traditional events commemorating the children's growth according to their age. The most popular one is known as the celebration of 7, 5, 3. This celebration involves a festival day for children ages seven, five, and three. As part of the celebration, girls at age seven and three and boys at age five visit a Shinto shrine with their family wearing traditional dress. The actual birthday celebration is carried out much as in Western countries. But in child care and educational institutions, birthdays are celebrated on a monthly basis. That is, children who share their birthday in the same month celebrate together. In Japan, group activities are common and considered a typical educational method.

The Japanese Group Orientation

In a study of how children are educated in Japanese kindergartens, using an ethnographic method, a difference was found between United States and Japanese ways of teaching. In identifying the "Japanese group-oriented tendency" the author described how Japanese children might belong to ten different groups simultaneously within the classroom. It is true that many groups exist in the kindergarten. Each group has its own name and /or color. For example, one particular child belongs to the kindergarten, the grade, the class, the group, the bus route, the locker, the uniform, the smock, the hut, the outdoor cap, and the shoes shelf. Each girl in the orange group, for instance, is called Miss Orange Group. By calling a child by his or her group name instead of his or her own name, a teacher intends to help the children become aware of the responsibility to the group (not as an individual). In part, Japanese children belong to many groups because one teacher has to take care of more than twenty to thirty children in her class without an assistant.

Group Behavior and Discipline

The sense of group belongingness helps children behave well not only for themselves but also for their peers. It also provides children with close human

relationships with their peers. To not make trouble for others comes ahead of all other things.

At the same time, group solidarity may cause some negative impacts on children who are isolated from the group. Although Japanese early childhood education has insisted on the importance of child's individual development, it may be difficult to develop a child's individuality within such group-oriented educational conditions.

“Omoiyari” or Altruism

“Omoiyari” may be called altruism in psychology. It is defined as behavior initiated based on the understanding of other people's situations and feelings. Although Japanese children experience group-oriented education, this doesn't appear to take away their sense of themselves as individuals. In Japan, young children are often encouraged to express their own thoughts. However, being nice, friendly, and sympathetic to others is the ultimate educational goal during the preschool days. Cooperating with peers promotes many dynamic activities; for example, building a big structure with large blocks and performing dramatic play helps promote an understanding of how to participate in group activities. Through this process, most teachers encourage children to make friends with their peers. Therefore “omoiyari” must be the keyword in Japanese education of early childhood.

Bokasi—A Gradation of Color

The word “bokasi” (which means gradation or obscure or vague or ambiguous) is also a key factor in understanding Japanese culture, thinking, language, human relationships, and view of nature and social structure. In artistic terms “bokasi” is an unlimited gradation of color. It is a beautiful technique used for traditional clothing. Japanese Empress Michiko frequently wears a “bokasi” designed dress. Psychologically, “bokasi” is thought to be an expression of an ambiguity. One expresses ambiguity in order to avoid showing independence from the group. Thus one identifies oneself as a member of the group and makes one's individual position congruent with that of the group.

Special Programs

Another important characteristic of Japanese early childhood care and education involves special programs, which are introduced in day-care centers and kindergartens. Those special programs are defined to be activities carried out on a certain day for a certain educational purpose. According to the purpose of education, each special program is planned appropriately for children. There is an entrance ceremony, the parent meeting, a home visit, children's day, mother's day and father's day (parent day), festival time, memorial day, good teeth day, July 7 festival (Tanabata), pool open day, summer festival, lodging with peers away from families, moon viewing, elder people's day, sports day, excursions, sweet potato digging, autumn festival, Christmas, New Year days, “Setsubun” bean scatter (to drive out bad luck), girl's festival and the graduation ceremony. It is not

necessary to carry out all these programs in one institution, but it is often heard that teachers are forced to host these events even in daily programs, which results in a very busy schedule and insufficient time allocation for daily care.

Why do we have so many special events? Most are traditional social events that have been carried out in the community. With the economic growth that occurred in the 1970s many community-initiated traditional events or festivals were replaced by commercialism. Communities and families no longer play a major role in such annual events. Consequently, preschool teachers are encouraged to provide opportunities for children to experience those annual events. This has led to concern regarding allocating enough time for children's free play in daily activities.

Cultural Differences

Japan is not strictly a homogeneous society. There are aboriginal people in the northern part of Japan. In the western part of the country there has been mixing and interacting with people from China, Korea, and South East Asia for centuries. Recently, many students have expressed an interest in multicultural education. More children from abroad are involved in Japanese preschools. Japanese teachers tend to treat foreign children equally; however, foreign children are encouraged to accept Japanese culture and life just like their Japanese counterparts. Behaving similarly with others might be stressful for some foreign children. Japanese educators sometimes lose sight of the fact that foreign students have their own individuality and their own culture, in favor of cooperation and harmonization with Japanese culture. But multicultural education in preschool settings is a growing concern among those who study early childhood education in Japan.

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Family Involvement in Japan

History

Japanese education has some characteristics that differentiate it from other countries in terms of family involvement. School/kindergarten events are seen as family life events that include whole extended families, many school/kindergarten supplies are individual personal possessions, and the educational curriculum encompasses social manners. Why this is so can be looked at from a historical perspective.

During the Edo period, when Japan was isolated from other countries for over 200 years, each social class in Japan had its own separate educational system. The Samurai class had their own clan schools for their sons to be taught Confucianism, the Chinese philosophy of politics and morality, and martial arts, reading, writing, and arithmetic. For the lower classes of farmers, merchants and craftsmen, there were small schools called “terakoya,” literally meaning small temple room, where Buddhist monks taught small numbers of students the specialized skills of basic literacy and the math skills they would need to function successfully in their designated profession.

However in 1868, the Meiji Restoration took over the Edo Shogunate, and the new government abandoned the old popular educational system, promulgating a new system adopting Western educational approaches. Although over the years this educational system has been reformed, its top-down nature and strong centralization under government control have not been altered.

The first kindergarten in Japan was established for aristocrats in 1876. This government-led education system continued after World War II and was successful in achieving high enrollment and literacy rates for the Japanese. Using the same curriculum all throughout Japan, this system created a meritocracy, whereby social success was determined by academic achievement based on one’s academic resume, without relation to the social class in which one was born. With educational success having become the key to social success, schools and teachers have gained relatively high social positions and garnered widespread respect. Therefore, school ceremonies are almost family events in which every member should participate. Community members attend other school events like sports days or performances, thus becoming the glue that holds a community together as communities’ traditional festivals diminish in cities.

The morality of Confucianism has had a great influence on the Japanese mentality. The principle that government, not citizens, should have the responsibility for education leads to the concept that morality and social manners also belong to school education. As a result, schools have internalized the idea that it is their role to teach social manners. One example of this is: at elementary and junior high schools, lunch time and overseeing the classroom cleanup by the students are also matters for teachers to control. During lunch, the teacher encourages the children to try a variety of foods, encouraging them to not take what they cannot eat, and to use good table manners. She/he is actively monitoring and teaching during lunchtime. In early childhood education its tendency is the same as that found in school.

Early Childhood Education

Two separate streams make up the system of preschool education in Japan (see earlier). One component is the day-care center, which is under the control of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. Day-care centers give education and care to babies and children from 0 to 6 years old whose parents are both working; as a result they are open more than eight hours a day.

The second stream is for children who are cared for by someone (almost always stay-at-home mothers) at home and who attend kindergartens from 3 to 6 years old. These kindergartens are under the regulation of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Although there have been two separate systems, the two functions of care and education are merging together and the education of all 3- to 6-year-olds at day-care centers falls under the same guidelines that kindergartens have followed and is overseen by the Ministry of Education.

Family Involvement

Two aspects regarding family involvement in early childhood education will be discussed. The first will explain how Japanese kindergartens and day-care centers traditionally involve parents. The second will explore the new concept developing in day-care centers and kindergartens regarding family services for all child-rearing families, as well as in the communities and nonprofit organizations.

Parental involvement in kindergarten and day care. Shortly before a child begins kindergarten, parents are requested to prepare all the supplies that he/she will need for kindergarten life. Parents either purchase or make between ten and twenty items such as uniforms, bags, and lunch bags. For day-care centers, the list is even longer, expanding to include sheets for sleeping on during nap time, pajamas, diapers, futon covers, etc. Traditionally, the kindergarten recommended that the mother make these items by hand as an expression of her love of her child. Recently, many kindergartens have lessened the emphasis on homemade items. A further expectation of parents is that they write their child's name on all the new items. This is quite a time-consuming task as kindergarten supplies are almost always personal possessions.

A typical supply list would include a box of crayons, a clay case, scissors, a drawing notebook, and colored pencils. Marking each item goes beyond simply writing the child's name on the top of a crayon box. Individual items such as each of the 12 crayons, the top of the crayon box and the bottom of the crayon box would have the child's name written on it. Although this labeling is time consuming, it is through this patient work that parents and children mutually cultivate their expectation of attending kindergarten. This feeling is passed down over generations in a Japanese family.

Entrance and graduation ceremony and other events. Entrance and graduation ceremonies have special meaning for families with kindergarten children. Parents and children, and sometimes grandparents, come in their proper and rather formal

clothes, usually a dark color and navy suits or dresses. Grandparents sometimes join in this event by presenting new clothes for the entrance ceremony. Even though these ceremonies are held on weekday mornings, most fathers would not consider missing such an important event. Events like sports day, drama performance day, art exhibitions and musical concerts at kindergartens and day-care centers are also important to family life. These are held as big events lasting the full day and are open to all families in the community. Often grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and community members attend, as this is a focal point in the life of the neighborhood as well and an opportunity to meet each other.

Activities for parents. During the two or three years of kindergarten, parents are kept informed of their child's life through parent/ teacher class meetings, open observation days, and one-on-one parent/teacher interviews. Parents do not usually participate in daily kindergarten activities (such as reading stories or helping put together art work). However, when teachers request volunteers to accompany field trips, parents are often willing to sign up and assist. Kindergartens also serve as a social outlet for parents. For example, many kindergartens have parents' circles for cooking, chorus, and arts. Library groups and puppet theater classes may perform dramas and storytelling as part of the kindergarten activities.

Curriculum

Life skills are also taught in day-care centers and kindergartens. Life skills are seen as important educational objectives and they stand equal with other academic objectives in early childhood education. Day-care centers and kindergartens both emphasize greetings, washing hands, mealtime manners, brushing teeth after lunch, and other social manners. Teachers feel responsible for fostering the child's development of a proper daily routine, and actively promote and expect that the family cooperates and supports the development of this discipline. In an effort to assist parents during summer break, many kindergartens send newsletters recommending appropriate behavior during the long summer holiday. Examples include not drinking too many cold drinks in the hot summer, being careful to avoid traffic accidents, going to bed early and getting up early, and not watching too much TV.

Parent-Teacher Communication

There are special message notebooks that encompass the majority of communication between teachers and parents and are exchanged back and forth between them. At day-care centers these are particularly important and are written in daily, with teachers communicating detailed information such as the frequency, timing and condition of bowel movements, appetite and consumption at mealtime, and observations at nap and play. Reciprocally, parents are required to write the child's physical condition, body temperature, food consumption, bedtime and wake-up time, etc. Kindergartens also use notebooks to communicate how a child is relating to his peers, how he is participating in class activities or other relevant details from his time there. It is taken for granted that parents check the class newsletter

and also the kindergarten newsletters, because they contain important notices, such as changes in pick-up timings, lists of items to be brought for arts and craft activities in the following week or for upcoming field trips.

Involving Fathers

Although child-rearing traditionally has been the mother's role, day-care centers and kindergartens have recently invited fathers to play with the children and established meetings just for fathers to share their child-rearing experiences in comfortable situations.

New Family Services and Early Childhood Education

In the past, new parents looked to their parents, extended family members, and neighbors as child-rearing mentors, who would provide examples of child-rearing. Given the declining birthrate and aging society, young Japanese parents have little experience with child care, and nuclear families have no one in the neighborhood to advise them. Therefore, child-rearing neurosis and child abuse have become a greater concern in the past few years. To counter this, day-care centers and kindergartens are now offering their child-care resources to families in their communities, regardless of whether their child attends the kindergarten or not. Examples of this support are playgroups for parents with babies or toddlers, opening up the playgrounds or indoor play spaces for play, teachers counseling on child-rearing concerns, etc. The centers offer a gathering place for parents to drop in and meet other parents in the neighborhood, helping to develop friendships and alleviate feelings of isolation.

There is also a simultaneous push to establish family support services within the broader community. Local governments and nonprofit organizations also are offering drop-in activities, chat lounges, and space for counseling in their facilities. Although they are not early childhood education institutions per se, these settings function to help young parents by providing places to gather and play, with facilitators who are public health nurses or child-care workers. They also maintain groups for young parents to get together, setting up their own organizations or study groups to discuss child-rearing or their own problems. Sometimes these places provide supervision or babysitting services for children in order to give parents a short respite. The goal of these services is to prevent parents and children from feeling isolated, to help them make friends, and to alleviate some of the pressures and troubles of child-rearing.

With family support services for parents in the early childhood years the government is taking steps to counter the declining birth rate, which reached an alarmingly low number of 1.29 in 2005. Having children is felt to be an exceedingly heavy burden on mothers. Family support in Japan should have a dual role of not only offering day-care centers for children of parents rearing children, but also of preventing child abuse and poor environments for mothers and children. The concept of prevention is new to early childhood education in Japan and it will be more important in the future in family services.

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Kazuko Matsumura

Pedagogy in Japan

The current *National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens* (the guidelines for Japanese preschool education, revised in 2000) describes their basic principle as education through use of the environment, taking account of traits of early childhood. This principle of “education through environment” has three axes of practices: the importance of all phases of daily kindergarten life appropriate for early childhood, comprehensive guidance through play, and individual guidance based on understanding of each child. The approach can be summarized as “child-centered education.” The pedagogy of the Japanese child-centered preschool education has its origin at the dawn of kindergarten.

The Establishment of Kindergartens and the Introduction of Froebel’s “Gabe” Method

In the late nineteenth century, after Japan had been reformed from feudalism to a modern regime, the Meiji government introduced western policies and systems, including educational systems. In 1886, the government promulgated the “Order of School Education,” by which modern school education systems were started.

Masanao Nakamura (1832–1891), who was famous for his translation of “Self Help” of the British pedagogue Smiles, insisted that individual independence was indispensable for the modernization of Japan. He devoted himself to the establishment of educational systems for women and for young children. In 1876, when he was the president of the Tokyo Women’s Teachers College, he created an attached kindergarten, the first kindergarten in Japan. He introduced Friedrich Froebel’s theory to this kindergarten, asserting that under adequate conditions of collective education, young children should be assured their full development through play activities and interaction with peers. Ms. Clara Matsuno, who had graduated from the Froebelian teacher training school in Germany, had become the first head teacher of this kindergarten. Based on Froebelian ideas and methods, she introduced Froebel’s “Gabe” method. Within several years this “Gabe” method was spread into many kindergartens that had been opened in all parts of Japan at that time. However, this application of the “Gabe” method lost sight of Froebel’s original philosophy and became too formalistic.

The Beginning of Child-Oriented Education

In 1899, the “Act of Content and Facilities of Kindergarten Education Guidelines,” the first guideline for kindergarten education was enacted by the Ministry of Education. The guideline identified four contents of education: play, song,

speech, and handicrafts. Although “Gabe” includes just a part of the category of “handicrafts” in the guideline, the fact was that in many kindergartens most handcraft activities were collective handworks with “Gabe” objects under teachers’ instruction. By the early twentieth century, however, the “Gabe” method was being criticized as inflexible and too teacher oriented. Instead, child-centered theories were proposed. For example, Motokichi Higashi (1872–1958), an assessor at the Kindergarten attached to Tokyo Women’s Teachers College, emphasized the importance of free play. He systematized play-centered educational programs and published *The Method of Kindergarten Education* (1904). This was the first systematic theory of early childhood education by a Japanese author.

At the same time, the reform of teaching programs was proposed by two educators, Goroku Nakamura, the principle of the Kindergarten, and Minoru Wada, a teacher at Tokyo Women’s Teachers College. They insisted on a change from teacher-oriented programs to child-oriented or play-centered programs. However, this proposal was too progressive to be accepted widely at that time.

Sozo Kurahashi and the Progress of Child-Oriented Education

Early in the twentieth century, along with the tide of Taisho democracy, child-oriented approaches inspired by the American new educational movement of John Dewey, Kilpatrick, and others had a strong impact on kindergarten education. Fostering spontaneity, creativity, and individuality of children was valued.

The educator who created a child-oriented theory that was suitable for Japanese sociocultural conditions and traditional values was Sozo Kurahashi (1882–1955). He had been interested in early childhood education since his high school days. After majoring in child psychology at a university, he taught at Tokyo Women’s Teachers College. At its kindergarten, he played with children, observed them, and discussed them with teachers. In 1917, when he became the head of the kindergarten, he put all the “Gabe” materials together in a basket so that children could play with them freely and voluntarily. He practiced his child-centered education based on Froebel’s theory, instead of the formal education of “Gabe” method. To develop his own theory, he tried to integrate western theories with his practices at his kindergarten and the traditional Japanese view of education and children. He had studied the ideas of John Amos Comenius, John-Jacques Rousseau, and Johann Pestalozzi. Later, when he visited European countries and the United States, he studied Montessori, the theory of the Progressive Education, and especially Froebel. He knew that in the Japanese traditional view of education parents would have just observed their children and provided them with good environment, because the child was born good and had potentiality to grow up by himself. He integrated all these into his theory, not only practicing it in his kindergarten but also described it in his three books *The Preschool Education* (1932), *The Essence of Kindergarten (Youchien Shintei)*, 1934, revised in 1953) and *The Mind of Bringing up Children (Sodate no Kokoro)*, 1936). Almost all the basic ideas of the present national curriculum of kindergartens and day-care centers have already been shown in these works. His theory has been the pillar in the history of Japanese preschool education and still has a great effect on present education both theoretically and practically.

Promulgation of “the Kindergarten Act” in 1926 was followed by the increase in the number of kindergartens and improvement of their education. The model of the improvement was the education of the kindergarten attached to Tokyo Women’s Teachers College.

Kurahashi described his theory most systematically and comprehensively in *The Preschool Education*. Three purposes and eight methods of preschool education were introduced. The purposes are as follows:

1. *Kindergarten as a place of fundamental education.* Preschool education is fundamental to all education, because it cultivates the humanity and the potentiality of self-development that are the basis of further development.
2. *Fostering physical strength and health.* To foster children’s physical strength and health, teachers should give children opportunities to enjoy their moving bodies. Outdoor play is an example. These experiences would motivate them to maintain their health by themselves.
3. *Fostering a good nature.* “Good nature” in Japanese means gentleness, sympathy, and intimate feelings toward others, and is highly valued in Japanese society as a fundamental trait of humanity. It should be cultivated with deliberate and delicate care by adults in early childhood.

The eight methods of preschool education are as follows:

1. *Daily-life oriented education.* To encourage the development of children’s minds and bodies, educational programs should be based on consideration of all aspects of their own daily lives. This means that it is important to respect their spontaneity, not to interfere in their natural stream of life, and to assure them that they be able to lead their lives voluntarily.
2. *Respect for play.* It is through play that children show the essence of their nature. Play gives children the power of future development, and so must have an essential role in development of young children.
3. *Encouraging social relationships.* Preschool education cannot consist only of the one-on-one teacher-child relationship. It is also important that children have opportunities to encounter and relate with one another in order to establish social relationships.
4. *Preparing a good environment.* A desirable kindergarten environment is one in which children feel free, behave voluntarily, get rich stimulation from their surroundings, and thus accomplish self-fulfillment in their everyday lives. Kurahashi’s idea of the emphasis on environment was maintained later in the national guidelines as the concept of “education through environment.”
5. *Grasping opportunities for intervention.* To guide children in respecting their own stream of life, it is important for teachers to seek appropriate chances to intervene and support them.
6. *Supporting the motivation for achievement and self-satisfaction.* A teacher expresses his/her appreciation for the children when they devote themselves to their activities, and supports them until they have deep satisfaction. This brings them a sense of self-fulfillment and further motivation to achieve.
7. *Inducement in life.* The concept of “inducement” in Japanese is that a good environment guides children in a desirable direction for educational purposes. The

teacher has a role of “inducing” children, because he/she is one of the elements of the environment. The method of inducing is, above all, to be vivid and active and to invite children to share in that life. Children are inspired by example, and lead their own lives voluntarily and actively.

8. *Interacting with children with a warm heart (“Kokoro-mochi”).* *Kokoro-mochi*, a Kurahashi term, means having a sympathy or resonance for others’ feelings. When children lead full lives, they should have a warm heart and kokoro-mochi. Teachers should be sensitive to each child’s kokoro-mochi, express appreciation for those feelings, and recognize those feelings as positive attribute, rather than simply to encourage the child’s intellectual interests. This also enhances respect for individuality.

In *The Essence of Kindergarten*, Kurahashi also explained “self-fulfillment,” one of his central concepts. Children have the potentiality of self-fulfillment innately and develop it in free and spontaneous play activities. Teachers can support them by preparing adequate “arrangements” that guarantee children feel free. His theory was widely accepted by kindergarten teachers and researchers and has become the basic principle of early childhood education.

Pedagogy since World War II

Following complete destruction during World War II, the new educational system was mandated in 1948. Kindergartens were included in the educational system operated under the Law of School Education. New guidelines of care and education (both for kindergartens and day-care centers) were enacted in that year. Kurahashi’s ideas were retained as the theoretical basis of these guidelines.

Since then, the guidelines have walked along a winding path to the current version. The first revision of guidelines (*National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens*) in 1956 established six domains of educational content; health, social competence, nature, language, music and rhythm, and drawing. In 1966 the Ministry of Welfare created the guidelines for day-care centers, in which the kindergarten guidelines were applied for children older than 3 years old.

Emphasis on continuity with elementary school education in these guidelines reinforced the inclination toward direct instruction that grew along with Japan’s economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s. Kindergartens appeared that were explicit in giving young children an intellectual education and preparation for success in school. These trends raised various controversies. In 1989, a third revision of the guidelines validated child-centered education as the essence of preschool education. Once again, “education through environment” was declared, as well as Kurahashi’s three purposes; education in the stream of daily life under suitable conditions for early childhood, comprehensive education through play, and guidance appropriate to each child’s traits. The educational contents were revised to five domains; health, human relations, environment, language, and expression.

The pedagogy of preschool education since World War II has often been challenged by those who proclaim the importance of the early instruction of intellectual abilities such as numeracy and science. They look at children as future

technocrats or eminent experts who will contribute to our economic growth. However, Kurahashi's successors all over Japan have cherished his theory because they believe that the essence of preschool education is to foster humanity. For example, Makoto Tsumori, who focuses his research and practices on children's inner development, expressed this thought in his work *Horizons of Early Childhood Professionals* (1997): "Taking care and educating children [For Tsumori, care and education are a set and equally important.] in preschool is the work of supporting the development of human beings. When children through their challenges discover themselves in interaction with teachers, they can make their way forward with self-confidence. The major concern of teachers should be whether children behave according to their own will: that is, whether they bring up themselves."

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Nobuko Kamigaichi

Curriculum in Japanese Early Childhood Education

An Experience-Based Curriculum

In Japanese kindergartens and day-care centers, the central part of the curriculum is children's experiences in play. Play is highly valued, because it is an autonomous activity of children. The Japanese concept of curriculum is not one that has children acquire knowledge and skills by systematic teaching programs. Rather, it is a type of curriculum in which a teacher picks up and focuses on an aspect of a child's experience, gives suggestions about it, and accumulates these occasions in various activities within children's play. We call it experience-based curriculum. For example, if a child is interested in insects and hunts them during the playtime, a teacher, respecting the child's interest, could plan programs about insects. The teacher could ask the child to draw a picture of an insect, and also to prepare picture books such as the life of insects or how to keep insects. It is likely that the child would be fascinated with such activities. These experiences nurture in him or her a scientific mind, expression of feelings, and/or respect

for the life of other creatures. We consider this concept of curriculum desirable for early childhood education for it builds the basis for development over the lifespan.

Early childhood is the period of life where children enrich their sensibilities, acquire positive attitudes toward various matters, and become aware of concepts of objects and events, through concrete and immediate experiences. Education in kindergartens and day-care centers sets out to fulfill these aspects of development, and play is a process central to accomplishing this goal. However, play does not mean “laissez-faire.” The subjects of play are the children themselves. Teachers, while respecting children’s autonomy and their own will, should think about what the necessary experiences are for each individual at every moment, reflect on what activities and environmental conditions can provide them optimal circumstances, and then plan and construct the actual (concrete) environment.

An experience-based curriculum is more difficult for teachers than a goal-oriented curriculum in which achievement goals are set, planned to be attained, and put into practice. In Japan, we believe that it is better that teachers, while respecting children’s autonomy, carefully insert desirable factors into the play environment, and allow children to have additional useful experiences with them. However, this demands more competence of planning and a deeper understanding in children than is required in goal-oriented instruction. For these reasons, it is not always successful in practice.

Policy Background

The concept of this type of curriculum has a basis in law. Japanese kindergarten is one of the school institutions that operates under the Law of School Education. Article 77 of that law states that “the kindergarten aims to give education and care to young children by providing a suitable environment and to encourage their development of minds and bodies.” More concrete criteria for curriculum are found in Article 76 of Rules of the Law of School Education, called the National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens. The curriculum for children from 3 to 6 years of age in kindergartens as well as day-care centers is based on these guidelines. Here the discussion will be limited to the application of the guidelines to kindergarten education.

National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens

First, the guidelines regulate the time conditions of kindergartens. In principle, kindergartens should be open no more than thirty-nine weeks a year and four hours per day. In fact, due to recent flexibility in the application of this regulation, more and more kindergartens accept children for a longer time.

As for education, the guidelines indicate that kindergartens should think about the children’s future learning, so that the aims of education will be accomplished by all aspects of children’s lived experience in kindergarten, from entrance to departure and at every moment in the daily life of the child. In keeping the whole kindergarten life appropriate to developmental stages of early childhood, teachers foster the development of children mainly through play. In other words, the aims

of education should not be pursued primarily by guiding children with a teacher's initiative. The principles of education contained in the Guidelines, curricular aims and contents, and the multiplicity of developmental aims with each activity are discussed in more detail below.

Principles of Education

There are the three principles of kindergarten education: that the lived experience be suitable for early childhood, that a comprehensive education be provided through play, and that education be carried out in accordance with the specific developmental traits of the individual child.

Young children can develop and widen their world when feeling that they are affirmed and loved by adults. In constructive kindergarten life, built on the feeling of trust with teachers, children have interest voluntarily in various things and engage themselves in play, in which they have positive relations to others and events. Teachers have to provide curriculum experiences that assure these aspects of development.

In each kindergarten curriculum is developed according to age level. Although one curriculum is applied to all children of the same age level, individual difference is also taken into consideration. Teachers have to prepare different paths and means according to the developmental stages of each child.

Aims and Contents

What should be nurtured in play, the central process in Japanese early childhood education? The National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens formulate "contents" and "aims of education." "Contents" describe necessary practices to accomplish the aims. "Aims" do not mean goals to be achieved, but rather are orientations of development; that is, sentiments, attitudes, or motivations that are to be fostered in the course of development. There are five areas of developmental orientation: health, human relationships, expression, environment, and language. The concepts in these areas should not be confounded with those of subjects in school learning. For example, "health" does not simply mean physical activities, and the curriculum in health should not only be related only to physical activities. The orientations of these five areas are as follows:

- *Health*—to foster a healthy body and mind; to encourage keeping healthy and safe through self-care.
- *Human relationships*—to foster cooperative relationships and empathy for others; to foster independence and autonomy.
- *Expression*—to foster the ability to express one's feelings and opinions; to enrich sensibilities and creativity.
- *Environment*—to foster explorative interest in surrounding objects and events, and to apply these experiences in life.
- *Language*—to foster and to express verbally one's feelings and thoughts with one's own words; to listen to others' speech; to nurture sensitivity to language and to verbal expressions.

Comprehensiveness of Aims and Orientations

The curriculum should be developed so that children have comprehensive experiences of these five aims in one activity. Teachers expect that the accumulation of various experiences within each activity, which interrelate these five orientations in a comprehensive way, will be fruitful for each child's development. An example follows:

Some 5-year-old children are going to organize a relay race. They make a course by tracing it with line-marker on the ground. In planning the race, the children find that they need more runners. The children invite their friends to join them. Then they make two teams and begin the race.

This sequence of behavior is totally self-governing, and contains many elements. A relay race is a physical activity; it contains the "content" of "play voluntarily in outdoors" in the "health" area. Making a course together and appealing to friends demonstrates a realization of the "content" of "think by oneself, behave in one's own initiative" and "cooperate with friends, have sympathy toward others" in the area of "human relationships." And it also represents "have a pleasure of self-expression" in the area of "language." In this process, teachers should observe children attentively, interpret comprehensively what the children are experiencing, and grasp how the experiences are accumulated. In this example, if a teacher thinks that this is an opportunity to regulate the number of runners, he/she may give the children pieces of cloth (or badges) with numbers so that they find an equal number more easily by themselves. Thus, after interpreting the children's experience in play and extracting important elements from it, teachers add further necessary elements to enrich or modify their play situation. This is the process of making and practicing curriculum in a kindergarten. Evaluation of curriculum examines what aims were realized in their activities and what aims could not be activated. Further planning will be carried out on the basis of the evaluation.

Educational Practices

Teachers make two sets of curricular programs. The first of these is short-term, including daily and weekly plans and activities. The second is the long-term program, containing monthly, semester, and annual plans and activities. Both programs have the same sequence: (1) understanding the children's reality by observation, (2) setting aims for the education, (3) planning of the supporting environment, (4) modifying the aims or reconstituting the environment by observation and evaluation. What is most important for teachers is to understand children both in the long term and in the short term. It is not easy for a novice to make a short-term program in the perspective of a long-term program. Without it, however, it is difficult to really understand children's actual states.

What is the best kindergarten life for development of a young child? It may be one in which, under human conditions that affirm all his or her existence, time, space, and other physical conditions allow the child to do try-and-error as

he or she wishes. The competence acquired through play is a kind of basic living force. It is implicit, and its effect is hard to see immediately. It becomes explicit only in later life. However, due to recent social trends demanding immediate visible effects of education (i.e., a child becomes capable of something that can be demonstrated), an increased number of kindergartens adopt a goal-oriented curriculum. A variety of possible interpretations of the National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens allows for diversity of curriculum in kindergartens. We have to reexamine what sorts of curriculum are most appropriate and needed for early childhood education, given that this is the period for construction of the basis of personality.

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Play in Japanese Early Childhood Education

Definition of Play in Early Childhood

Playing is one of the most important activities in early childhood. Playing is voluntary and is in itself an objective, rather than just being a method of adjusting to reality. Playing has a lot of freedom, with high changeability. Because of this, playing is perceived as being fun and comfortable, and children will regard playing as something that would give them pleasurable feelings. Children can develop many functions through playing, which enables them to adapt more adequately to reality. At the same time, they will develop their ability to use imagination. Imagination may help them overcome difficulties they face in reality. Playing in early childhood also encompasses learning. This is because children learn the feeling of wanting to play—the will to play—and play nurtures behavior that enables them to develop curiosity, the basis of learning throughout life.

The Place of Play in the National Curriculum

In the national curriculum for early childhood education in preschools in Japan importance is placed on “promoting proactive activities of children so they will be able to lead a preferable life as a child,” and “comprehensive teaching through play which is a voluntary activity conducted by children.” This shows that play in early childhood education is considered very important. Teachers are asked to come up with ways to enable children to proactively participate in play, while at the same time inserting teachers’ ideas into the school environment structure. In the preschools that follow this national curriculum children are able to spend two thirds of a day doing things that they have proactively selected. As mentioned in the definition, the foundation of this is the notion that play encompasses learning.

Types of Play in Early Childhood

Sensory motor play. An infant becomes aware of the world around him using his body, and develops many functions through the interaction with his surroundings. The younger the child, the more important the role of the body. Jean Piaget (1951) called use of the body in play sensory motor play.

One of the most popular sensory motor play activities among Japanese children is playing in the sand box. Children at preschool never get tired of sand boxes. They touch the sand, mix it with water, make dumpling shapes with it, dig a hole in the sand, or create a mountain in the sand box. They utilize all their senses, including touch, sight, and movement, feeling the coldness of sand or water, its weight, hardness, and softness, looking at the colors and shapes. They also make use of their cognitive ability and mental capacity during their adventures in the sandbox.

Symbolic play. The characteristics of symbolic play or make-believe play are “awareness of oneself and others” and “awareness of reality and fiction.” Through children’s development, this play tends to include larger and larger numbers of children, developing into mass symbolic play such as “playing house.”

In Japanese preschool education, teachers support further enhancement of make-believe play by creating corners for playing house and providing large-sized or regular-sized building blocks to stimulate children’s imagination. Importance is also placed on developing relationships with others through collective symbolic play. Children aged 4–5 engage in sophisticated symbolic play with stories and fictive human relationships. As their play becomes more deepened, teachers should support the children to establish relationships among each other through these activities.

Game play. During early childhood, children tend to pursue playing games with various rules, through which they learn that “everyone is equal under the rules.” They also acquire the foundation of a sense of ethics such as fairness and equality.

Let’s take playing soccer as an example. Today 4-year-old children are often playing soccer in the playground of kindergartens. At the beginning, they play alone, kicking the ball toward the goal. Then they begin kicking the ball among them. At the age of 5, they play soccer games by dividing themselves into teams. However, as they have no rules whatsoever for establishing a team, it often happens that one team wins because of a larger number of members. Children may get frustrated by this, and the game may end spontaneously just as it started. As they repeat this process, children realize that teams would work better if both teams had the same number of players, and that games wouldn’t be fun if they cheat. Children learn through trial and error that games would be more fun with rules. In Japanese preschools, teachers don’t impose rules on children at the beginning. What teachers try to accomplish is for the children to figure out who and what they are through self-generated games. By respecting children’s learning process, adults hope that they learn “morality” as well.

Expressive play. Expressive play has many cultural elements that lead to the nurturing of artistic qualities in children. This includes musical play such as listening to music and playing to musical rhythms, plastic play such as molding, and word play such as listening to stories, reading picture books and playing “first and last” the word game *shiritori*. Compared to other types of play, adults tend to support children actively with more cultural background, so that children can create a higher level of expressive activities using the techniques and knowledge of the teacher.

For example, when a teacher shows “The Three Billy Goats”(a Scandinavian story of three goats and trolls and one of the favorite books for Japanese children) and tells the story, children listen intently to it and cheer at the climax. They beg to have it read over and over again. While the teacher reads the story to them every day, he/she also encourages them to create “The Three Billy Goats Play.” The teacher proposes that they make a scene for the story. Using large-sized blocks, the children build a bridge. They themselves play the roles of goats and trolls, and this goes on for days. During this sequence of play over several days, children improve the way of constructing the bridge, or of creating costumes from clothing. Sometimes they add music. If one child is playing both the big goat and the small goat, he invents ways to change his face expressions and voices. By allocating responsibilities the relationships among children will deepen through this play.

Challenges Facing Play in Japanese Society

Through play, a child repeatedly goes through the process of “thinking while taking action,” which constitutes a basis for abstract thinking for the future. However, play environments that enable children to come up with voluntary playing activities have decreased dramatically. Playing, which was originally “natural,” has become part of “education.” In other cases, children are given a “culture for children” created by adults, rather than creating their own culture through play. The deterioration of environments for play also makes it difficult to nurture children’s abilities to interact with one another and to be aware of others’ feelings and thinking. Keeping in mind today’s Japanese social circumstances, the following requirements for play in early childhood become more and more important. Play should be proactive, creative, fulfilling, comprehensive, expose children to diversified experiences, and nurture cooperation among children. Finally, it should be experienced through the body.

As for teachers’ role, this involves grasping the challenges faced in the children’s development and supporting them in adequate manner. Teachers must observe children from the child’s perspective, while at the same time having expectations for them. They should consider the play environment carefully, ensuring that it is designed so that children can discover by themselves that learning is fun.

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Imagination and Creativity in the Early Childhood Classroom: Current Issues in Japan

In Japan, nurturing imagination and creativity is an important basis of early childhood education. Activities intended to nurture children's imagination and creativity involve not only artistic activities such as music, dance, drawing, and craft, but also other experiences including communication with other people and interaction with the environment. Among these, artistic activities are given special emphasis. These activities enrich children's emotions, cultivate their aesthetic sensibilities and cultural consciousness, and develop their relationships with others, as well as developing their cognitive skills and intellectual abilities. These effects cannot be realized by any other activities.

National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens

The National Curriculum Standards for kindergartens show five areas corresponding to several aspects of children's development. Among them, the area of *Expression* is particularly concerned with artistic activities.

The aims of expression at the kindergarten-level are the following:

- To develop enriched feelings toward beauty
- To enjoy expressing what one feels and thinks in individual ways.
- To understand expression enriches images and experiences in life.

The contents of expression are as follows:

1. Children recognize and enjoy the various kinds of sounds, colors, forms, texture, and movements in life.
2. Children come into contact with beauty and things that move people emotionally in life, and create enriched images.
3. Children express joy when impressed by an act of expression.
4. Children express thoughts and feelings freely through sounds, movement, drawing, painting, and other media.
5. Children are familiar with various materials and making use of them creatively in play.
6. Children are familiar with music. Students enjoy singing and using simple rhythmical instruments.
7. Children enjoy drawing, painting, and creating. Students use what they create in play and as decoration.
8. Children experience expressing their own images in words and movements, performing, and playing.

The following points for dealing with the contents are mentioned in The National Curriculum Standards:

1. Children's feelings will be enriched if they encounter beautiful and fine things. The images and objects that move children emotionally should have a rich connection with their surrounding natural and physical environment. A strong interaction between environment and experience can be fostered if children share their

impressions with other children and teachers, and express their impressions through the arts.

2. Children's self-expression is unique to childhood, but may seem simple. Teachers should encourage children to express themselves in their own ways, by being receptive to children's expression and by acknowledging the willingness of children to express themselves.
3. Teachers should provide developmentally appropriate play equipment and apparatus that allow children to fully express their intentions.

It is noted in the National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens that artistic activities should not be considered as opportunities for domain-specific trainings, or as preparation for elementary school learning. They should be intended as a part of children's daily experiences.

According to the National Curriculum Standards, art activities in kindergarten are planned to help children develop wholly, by providing experiences in their everyday lives. Kindergarten teachers carefully refrain from forcing children into specialized drills or training, but instead encourage them to express their ideas and feelings freely. Artistic and aesthetic programs are more often related to children's interaction with nature and their play than to intentional instruction designed to improve their skills or to increase their knowledge.

Imagination and Creativity in Musical Activities

Singing, playing instruments, and listening to music are familiar musical activities in Japanese kindergartens. Music curriculum is related to seasons, annual events, and children's daily lives. Music is often integrated with drama, dance, and the visual arts. One activity may involve singing, playing instruments, dancing, and making crafts. A comprehensive overall view of these activities is shown in The National Curriculum Standards.

The National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens were revised in 1989, when the area "Expression" was introduced for the first time. Music educators and researchers who are engaged in early childhood education have come to realize that the experiences suggested in the National Curriculum Standards can build the foundation of children's musical knowledge. Music education researchers do not expect kindergarten teachers to provide children with specialized musical training, nor a musical program that is to prepare for the elementary school music learning. Children's musical activities in kindergartens include making sounds with objects around them and listening to sounds in the environment, as well as singing, playing instruments, and listening to music.

Integrating Sounds in the Environment

Children live surrounded by the sounds of their daily lives. They listen to sounds such as falling raindrops, blowing wind through a bamboo grove, singing birds, and other sounds from nature. When children listen to these sounds, they associate them with images and engage their imaginations. For example, children may take turns putting a spiral seashell up to their ears, and have different reactions.

Some may say there is “a lion,” “sea sound,” or “running water” in the shell. In experiences such as these, sounds provoke imagination, and children make meaning through symbol and expression.

Children also make many sounds themselves. These sounds do not necessarily come from musical instruments. Children enjoy the exchange of sounds, which sometimes develops into what we can call musical improvisation. In musical improvisation, children communicate what they feel and think through the sounds they make. Experience with sounds motivates children to establish intersubjective relationships with others, enrich their imaginations, assign meanings to sounds, and sometimes organize sounds into a composition.

There are many cases in which a clear distinction between “participating in musical activities” and “being involved in sounds” cannot be made. In other words, children may participate in musical activities such as reproduction of musical pieces, but may also give musical meaning to ordinary sound situations around them. Sometimes listening to sounds around them and listening to music can be equally aesthetic. Making sounds and playing instruments can also be respected as imaginative and creative. In planning musical activities, it is necessary for kindergarten educators to integrate sounds in the environment with sounds produced by musical instruments in children’s everyday experiences.

Other Japanese Musical Programs

In addition to the principle ideas laid out by the National Curriculum Standards, there are several musical programs that are familiar in Japanese kindergartens. These imported methods are combined with Japanese traditional and modern repertoires and have taken root in Japanese kindergartens. The Jacques-Dalcroze method was introduced into Japanese early childhood education in the 1920s. K. Orff’s “*Music for children*” and Koday’s method both became popular in the 1960s. In most cases, these methods intend children’s musical activities to contribute to their development as a whole. Nurturing children’s imagination and creativity parallels the contents of the National Curriculum Standards.

Imagination and Creativity in Plastic Arts Activities

Art activities in Japanese kindergartens are currently called “plastic arts activities.” Visual art was once called “picture painting” in kindergartens, “arts and crafts” in elementary schools, and “fine arts” or “arts and crafts” in junior high schools and high schools. Historically, the aim of art education was to achieve realistic, adult-level art. The conception that “realistic art is good art” affected the content of art activity in the classroom. The lower the age of a child, the simpler the content of the art activity.

Approaches and philosophies in plastic arts curriculum. Humans’ innate senses are stimulated by their immediate environments. From this stimulation, humans actuate and express images. Young children often develop the ability to draw a circle without guidance. The skill develops through spontaneous representation. A young child assigns meaning to his/her image of the circle, and adds lines or

other circles to further define his/her image. The teacher can support this spontaneity through a “bottom-up process” in which teachers understand children’s potential. In this process, teachers encourage and assure children as they explore materials. A counter approach would be the “top-down process,” in which teachers give children goals to reach and guide them.

Japanese curriculum currently recognizes that when children are creative and imaginative, they are fully sensitive, stimulated, and motivated by their own initiatives. We cannot expect children be creative and imaginative by following instruction. It is important that art curriculum in early childhood respects the minds and spontaneous will of children. This type of early childhood art activity plays an important part in the development of young children.

Plastic arts activity in practice. “Plastic arts activity” is the act of interaction with objects. Interaction with familiar objects allows children to understand and transform the objects’ shapes, colors, or textures. Transforming the shapes and colors of familiar objects opens up the imagination. In kindergarten, children also combine one object with other ones to make new objects. Teachers provide encounters with these new shapes and colors that widen the possibilities of creation. In art made by both children and adults, objects are the media of expression that stimulate expression and are then manipulated. When we express our emotion on objects, they respond to us through transformation. Sometimes objects we make have the power to heal us by their transformed colors or texture. These qualities are true in professional artists’ work, but some assert that children can be artists as well. However, we do not agree with this assertion. We do not identify children’s art activity with artwork by artists who have more mature awarenesses of spirituality and intention.

Understanding plastic art activity in early childhood. Young children’s art activity has its own world. Children do not reproduce what they see. They try to represent what they are interested in. They focus interest on their own lives, and not on the objective world. Because their art activity reflects their experiences, the richer their experiences in life are, the more imaginative and creative their plastic arts activity. However, as children develop through elementary school, they will become more objective and their plastic arts activity will change its nature.

There is an assertion that the aim of art education is to bring children out of their own world of experience and teach them how to reach adult’s plastic activity. Some educators teach children “how to draw a person.” Some instruct them to paint an object with its original color. Some give them a theme of a picture to draw. These types of instructions neglect children’s subjectivity and fail to enrich their imagination and creativity.

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Infant and Toddler Care in Japan

Where are Japanese Infants and Toddlers during the Day?

Most Japanese infants under the age of 1 are at home, and as they get older, the percentage of enrollment at day-care centers increases. The table below provides an overview of the settings containing infants and toddlers nationwide.

Where Japanese children under three years spend their days

<i>Age</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>Day-care center</i>	<i>Other child care facilities</i>
0	92%	4%	3%
1	81%	17%	2%
2	74%	22%	4%

Source: Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor, 2003.

Most of these children are looked after by their mothers full time, regardless of age, until they are three years old. Among the many reasons why so many mothers have left their jobs to devote themselves to child-rearing has been a strong child-rearing belief, prevailing since the late seventies, referred to as the “legend of three-year-old child.” Influenced by the theory of attachment, it asserts that to assure a child’s healthy personality development, a mother has to be totally responsible of bringing up her child until he/she becomes three years old. Therefore, many mothers prefer to take care of their children by themselves before sending them to kindergarten at the age of 3.

However, since the 1990s, the number of women with infants who continue to work has rapidly increased. These working women prefer day-care centers rather than grandmothers or babysitters. In the last fifteen years alone, places at day-care centers have increased 1.8 times for infants under one (71,000) and 1.6 times for toddlers of 1 and 2 years of age (500,000). Often, demand exceeds supply; infants account for 10 percent and toddlers comprise 58 percent of the waiting lists at public centers. Local governments are trying to respond to this increase in demand for day-care centers for children under the age of 3. Other childcare facilities such as family care and small day-care rooms are concentrated in big cities where supply for day-care centers is far from satisfactory.

History

The first Japanese day-care center was created at the end of the nineteenth century in the countryside, where children of agricultural families were accepted while their mothers were working in the field. Day-care rooms were also established in some elementary schools for the younger brothers and sisters of school children, because otherwise the school-aged children had to baby-sit for their siblings within their own classrooms while their parents were working. These early facilities were as basic as open schoolrooms staffed with caretakers. At

the beginning of the twentieth century a day-care center was opened in a popular area of Tokyo for families of the lower class. This center was staffed with teachers who were specialists, educated at the first teacher training school for women. These teachers gave both care and education to children. These private centers were funded by charitable persons and social activists, and public centers soon followed. The aim of helping mothers and children of lower socioeconomic classes continued until World War II. After the war, new systems were introduced through both educational and welfare policies. Since 1948, day-care centers have been controlled by the Ministry of Social Welfare. The first national guidelines were established in 1952. Nevertheless, it was private day-care centers and day-care rooms that continued supporting working mothers and their children under the age of 3. These facilities varied in quality of the care they provided. Some were run based on educational principles, while others just babysat the children. Mothers had to wait until 1972 for the first public care of infants. Since then, private facilities have chosen different approaches; many have established approved centers, while others have decided to remain unapproved.

The Day-Care Center System

In Japan, a day-care center is legally under the control of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor, and operates under the Law of Child Welfare. It accepts children from infancy to 6 years of age, from parents who are unable to take care of them because of work or illness. Although it depends on the individual center, legally a child must be at least two months old in order to be placed in a day-care center. In 2005, there were 23,000 centers with 2,000,000 children from 0 to 6 years of age. Thirty percent of these children ranged from 0 to 2 years of age. There are public day-care centers (56% of all centers in 2003) that are operated by local governments, approved private centers, which are run under the same conditions as public centers, and non-approved private centers. As for public and approved private day-care centers, minimal standards of physical and staff conditions are set by the Ministry of Welfare and Labor. According to the authorities, a baby room should have at least 1.65 m² per child and for crawling babies, 3.3 m² per child. A center is open for more than twelve hours a day, including eight normal hours and then extended hours. The teacher/child ratio is 3 children for 1 teacher for a baby class, 6 children for 1 teacher for a class of toddlers of 1 and 2 years of age. Besides nursery teachers and the director, a center should also have a nurse if it has baby classes, a nutritionist and cooks.

Nonapproved centers are free from control of standards but are not subsidized by the government. Some centers accommodate mothers' needs not met by normal centers. For instance, there are "baby hotels" for children of mothers who work for long hours or at night.

Programs of Care and Education

The Japanese name for day-care center—"hoiku-en"—means "facility for care and education." It offers both care services and education to even the youngest

children. The Ministry of Welfare and Labor provides guidelines that give an overview of development, principles and objectives, and the teachers' roles and practices for children of each age level. For children under 3 years old, the guidelines have four chapters according organized around the following age levels; under 6 months old, 6-15 months old, 16-23 months old, and 24-35 months old. Care of infants and toddlers addresses health, physical cleanliness, nutrition, rhythm of life, and security. As for education, following the guidelines of kindergarten by the Ministry of Education, five domains of education are applied: health, human relations, interest in the surrounding environment, language, and expression.

According to the guidelines, when caring for infants under 15 months of age, day-care centers are responsible for promoting health, physical cleanliness, and nutrition. Centers are also responsible for establishing a rhythm of life, as well as security and emotional bonding between the teacher and each child under her/his care. Establishing and maintaining this affective bond with the teacher is believed to be of particular importance for a child's psychological security. Therefore, adult-infant interaction is very frequent, with physical contacts such as touching, holding, and playing in physical intimacy. The Japanese believe that play with adults stimulates curiosity which in turn promotes cognitive development.

Baby foods are cooked in different ways depending on children's age in months (from four to seven steps until 18 months old). Even during the weaning period the meal is meant not only for nourishment but also is also an occasion for enjoyment and having aesthetic sensory experiences. Cooks prepare various plates with different tastes and colors so that children of each age level can enjoy eating them. Because sleeping and emotional security are valued, a teacher accompanies a child until he/she falls asleep. Diaper changes are frequent, so that a baby becomes accustomed to being clean and develops a sensitivity to uncleanness. Additionally, nature is an important component of Japanese day-care centers. Going outdoors is seen as indispensable for promoting health. For example, even in winter, babies "take a walk" in a baby carriage, as it is believed that outdoor activities help children get in touch with nature.

Training children to be autonomous begins between the ages of 15-23 months. It is believed that children can acquire autonomy through emotional security and attachment to teachers. Care is taken not to destroy the important bond the child has with adults. The first stages of this training entail having the child eat by him/herself, using a spoon, and toilet training. Physical movements such as going up and down steps, and manipulation with the hands are encouraged in play and in outdoor activities. Also, listening to a teacher telling a story or singing stimulates the child's interest in language and expressive activities.

Two-year-olds have more autonomous tasks; taking off clothes, washing hands, going to the toilet by oneself, and eating by oneself are introduced with support from the teachers. Relationships with other children are respected. Developing conversations with teachers, looking at picture books and theater are seen as opportunities to enjoy speaking. Materials such as water, sand, mud, flowers, leaves, and seeds are incorporated in outdoor play to help children begin to have an understanding of nature.

Family Day Care

Family day care is a system of day care where an approved caregiver, often called a “day-care mom,” cares for not more than three children under the age of 3 at her home. Local governments organize and control this system of care. These governments give subsidies to day-care moms and also introduce parents to them. Since their creation in Kyoto City in the 1950s, these centers have played the role of “waiting rooms” for day-care centers. The number has been limited (1400 caregivers in 120 local governments in 1999) and concentrated in urban areas. Recently, however, this system has been reexamined due to a growing diversity of needs. Parents who want their babies to grow up in family circumstances rather than in a collective setting prefer this mode of care. The task for local governments is how to assure a professional quality of care by these moms and a satisfactory quality of the settings in which they provide care.

Recent Trends in the Public Care of Infants and Toddlers

We are now in transitional period for public day care. There are four big trends surrounding day care of children. The first point is diversification of needs. With the increase in working mothers, the variety of working styles demands diverse forms of day care; acceptance of children at night, care rooms for children while they are ill, creation of day-care centers in front of subway stations for the convenience for parents, and so forth.

The second trend relates to how Japan can best support full-time mothers. Urbanized lifestyle has contributed to young mother’s feelings of isolation. Some investigations show that many mothers find child-rearing painful work. The drastic decline in the fertility rate (1.29 in 2005) has shocked the government. Partly as a result, the Ministry of Welfare and Labor and local governments have instituted various child-rearing support policies. However, with insufficient budgets and without long-term perspectives, these policies are not always effective. Day-care centers are given additional tasks for providing various supports to full-time mothers. Examples include temporary day care, group activities for mothers, and consultations with mothers (face-to-face and by telephone). However, these are often carried out without additional specialized staff, which brings teachers nothing but more work. These supports need to be improved in order for the day-care centers to function well.

The third trend, which has begun in some big cities and is going to extend to other areas, is the privatization of public day-care centers. This privatization policy contains “freedom from minimum standards,” which may lead to the decline of quality of care. Some privatized centers are run by enterprises that follow “market principles.” While they aim to respond to “users’ needs,” they think the users are mothers and not children.

The fourth trend is the transformation of present kindergartens and other facilities into new organizations called “comprehensive facilities of care and education,” which have been created through collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Welfare and Labor. This system places various modes of care and education in one facility: kindergarten, day-care centers,

temporary day care, playroom for parent-child, etc. Although this system looks like an ideal care place because of its availability and flexibility, it was initiated without sufficient preparation; for example, kindergarten teachers without training are working with infants.

In the day care of infants and toddlers, we are facing a situation that raises the question, “which is important, mothers’ needs or children’s happiness?” The social trend has been toward mothers. However, we have to look at children to ask, “what are the best conditions of care and education for infant and toddlers in day care?” To answer this question, in addition to our long history of past experiences, we need more useful theories based on sufficient scientific data.

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Miwako Hoshi-Watanabe

Inclusion, Care, and Education for Children with Special Needs in Japan

Introduction

In Japan, special education has been serving children with disabilities since the end of the Second World War. The educational practices designed for these children are based on the kinds and the degrees of the disabilities. However, several changes have occurred in the special education field during the last decade. Some of these changes are: increased social interests to normalization; increased severity and variety of disabilities among children; and an increased awareness of mild developmental disabilities of children who are enrolling in regular schools. To respond to these changes, Japan’s special education program is facing a crucial turning point, prompting it to review its mission and its methods of practice.

To develop new concepts and systems, an Advisory Committee on Future Directions for Special Education in the 21st Century was organized in 2001. The committee’s final report was submitted to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in March, 2003. According to the report, basic concepts for developing special education for the future were stated as follows: “In line with the government policy for enhancing normalization in our society, a lifelong support system shall be developed through cooperation among every sector in society to promote children’s autonomy and participation in all aspects of society.”

The 2001 report indicates that the kinds and the degrees of disabilities are no longer the main focuses of special education; rather the specific needs of children with disabilities are the focus. In other words, special education in Japan is moving away from separated/integrative education and shifting toward an inclusive education model. Along with this change, MEXT has shifted the

term from “Special Education” (*Tokushu-Kyoiku*) to “Special Support Education” (*Tokubetu-Shien-Kyoiku*).

Since this conceptual change, Special Support Education is in a transitional period. Therefore, these new concepts have not yet been fully implemented in the Japanese school systems.

The Special School System

Children with severe or profound disabilities are eligible to attend the special schools (*Yougo-Gakkou*) for the blind, the deaf, children with intellectual disabilities, children with physical disabilities, and children with health impairments. Distinctive programs are prepared to meet each child’s needs in special schools. There are four levels of schools in the special school system: kindergartens, elementary schools, lower secondary and upper secondary schools. For children who cannot attend schools, special schoolteachers are provided through a home-visit program. Socialization is an important component of the special school system. In order to promote the children’s participation in society, children in special schools are encouraged to be involved in activities in regular classes with their peers (*Koryu-Kyoiku*) and activities in the community.

Special Classes

Special classes (*Tokushu-Gakkyu* or *Shinsbo-Gakkyu*), which are located in elementary and lower secondary schools, are available for children with moderate and mild disabilities. Children who participate in these special classes join their peers in regular classes in some subjects and school activities. Children with mild disabilities enrolling in regular classes are eligible to attend resource rooms (*Tukyu*) depending on their special needs. MEXT provides the Course of Study (*Gakushyu-shido-yoryo*) and national curriculum standards for schools. Each school develops distinctive curricula according to the needs of the children.

The Road to Inclusion

Although the actual implementation of inclusive education has not yet been accomplished, the 2001 Advisory Committee provided several concrete proposals based on the earlier mentioned concepts, such as; (1) the possible amendment of The Order for Enforcement of the School Education Law regarding placement of children with disabilities; (2) Establishment of special support services in regular classes for children with special educational needs such as Learning Disabilities (LD), Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and so on; (3) Establishment of new functions of special schools as local Special Education centers; (4) Reconsideration of the classroom management system of special classes and resource rooms; (5) Promotion of enrollment to upper secondary schools and enrichment of life-long learning of people with disabilities; (6) Encouragement of professional development for Special Education personnel.

Some efforts in line with these proposals were already underway. For example, in 2001, the Advisory Committee on the “National Agenda for Special Support

Education” was established to help clarify the future role of special schools and search for better support for children with mild disabilities including LD, ADHD, and high functioning autisms who were attending regular classes. The committee suggested five objectives: (1) To make Individual Education Programs (IEP) for each child; (2) To place a Special Support Education coordinator in each school (including special schools as well as elementary and secondary schools); (3) To organize a committee to coordinate local administrative departments of Special Support Education; (4) To transform special schools to local Special Support Education centers; and (5) To integrate special classes and resource rooms into Special Support Education rooms.

The objectives appear to facilitate the development of an adequate environment for promoting inclusive education. However, as mentioned above, implementation in schools has only recently begun and educators are struggling to develop Special Support Education in their schools. It is expected that the objectives listed above will take time to implement and will be achieved in the near future.

Support Services for Children

Regarding children before school age, various types of social welfare services are available to support children with special needs. Since the 1960s, pediatricians, public health nurses, and psychologists have performed health examinations for all children from infancy to 3 years of age. Follow-up programs, or early intervention programs, are available for at-risk children and their parents. These programs involve specialists in local Child Guidance Offices (*Jidou-soudansho*), Health Care Centers (*Hoken Center*), Centers for Handicapped Children (*Shougai-Fukushi Center*) and the like.

After the follow-up programs, most of the children who need Special Support Education attend *Yochien* (Kindergartens for children from 3 to 6 years old), *Hoikuen* (Day-care centers for children from infancy to 6 years old) and/or facilities for children with special needs.

In facilities for children with special needs, specialists such as early childhood educators/caregivers, doctors, psychologists, physical therapists, and speech therapists guide individualized programs in a small group setting. However, these facilities may differ, as the availability of the specialists and programs varies among local governments.

In recent years, an increased number of children with special needs have been integrated into the public *Yochien* and *Hoikuen*. It is very common for public *Yochien* and *Hoikuen* to accept two or three children with special needs. In many provinces and cities, the local government provides additional financial support so the program can employ an extra educator or a caregiver for children with special needs. However, there is a lack of trained special needs educators/caregivers. Although children who attend *Yochien* or *Hoikuen* are able to continuously receive periodical checkups and guidance at the local Child Guidance Offices, Health Care Centers, and Facilities for Children with Special Needs, professional supports are still needed in *Yochien* and *Hoikuen*.

To solve this problem, outreach programs (*Junkai-Soudan*) by consulting staff members, who are mostly psychologists, are becoming popular among public

Yochien and *Hoikuen*. Such programs provide professional support for educators/caregivers and parents, along with suggestions on how to plan an individualized program for the children. These outreach programs help facilitate inclusive education and care in early childhood education. Unfortunately, these services are not available for most of the private *Yochien* (about 60% of all *Yochien* are private) and the private *Hoikuen* (about 45% of all *Hoikuen* are private) in Japan. Thus, it is essential to build a system that extends outreach programs to private *Yochien* and *Hoikuen*.

Teacher Training

Another way to solve the problem is to provide educational opportunities for early childhood educators and caregivers, helping them learn about special support education. Some efforts are already made, for example, caregivers in *Hoikuen* are required to complete a subject “Caring for Handicapped Children (*Shougaiji-Hoiku*)” as it is part of the national curriculum. To improve the quality of special support educators, the National Institute of Special Education (NISE) and local Special Education Centers are assisting the government by offering specialized training programs for educators.

Fostering Inclusiveness and Cooperation in Schools

It is also crucial to facilitate collaboration and cooperation among teachers/caretakers, parents, and schools. Without fostering an inclusiveness, their educational initiatives will be ineffective. As discussed above, special, elementary, and secondary schools hope to place a coordinator of Special Support Education in each school. However, few discussions have been officially initiated for facilitating collaboration and cooperation among them in *Yochien* and *Hoikuen*, with most efforts stemming from individual educators or caregivers.

Partnership between the families with and without handicapped children is another key to promoting inclusive education. Partnerships among the families with handicapped children have been increasing in the last decades. A number of parents with handicapped children have organized groups and are taking active roles in our society. On the other hand, not enough attention has been paid to partnerships between the families with handicapped children and the ones without them.

The present situation of Special Support Education in Japan, particularly in early childhood education and care, calls out for improvement in a number of areas. The new concepts of Special Support Education and their implementation are expected to become established practice in the near future.

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Public Policies in Japan

Today, the child-rearing environment and education have become important issues for several reasons: the declining childbirth rate, the trend toward nuclear families, the lessening of the importance of education in the community, the increasing numbers of working women, and the trend toward academic competences. The political movement supporting early childhood education and care is changing rapidly. This section focuses on the main issues facing Japan: the future of early childhood education, establishing connections between early childhood and elementary school education, and improving the quality and expertise of kindergarten teachers based on the recent policy trends set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

The Future of Early Childhood Education in a Changing Environment

Recently the Central Council for Education (2004) published a report titled “The future of early childhood education based on the changing environment surrounding children,” in which early childhood is regarded as a critical growth period for cultivating the very basis of human development. Several directions for the future of early childhood education were proposed. The first was the “overall promotion of early childhood education by the home/community/institution.” Early childhood education should insure the healthy growth of children, with a balance of educational responsibility among three areas: the home, the community, and institutions such as kindergarten, which is seen as enriching early childhood education. However, the power to educate at home and in the community has decreased with the rapidly changing social environment, affecting education in institutions such as kindergarten. Accordingly, one current focus is the “enrichment of early childhood education based on the continuity of children’s lives, development, and learning,” which encompasses such areas as the reinforcement and improvement of the continuity between early childhood and elementary school education, and assurance of a smooth transition for prekindergarten children who are under three years of age to kindergarten.

Key Issues and Related Policies

The following three issues and seven policies for enriching early childhood education were listed in the report. The key issues are as follows:

1. Reinforcing and expanding the function of education.
2. Regenerating and empowering the home and community.
3. Reinforcing the foundations that support early childhood education.

The related policies are as follows:

1. To provide all children the opportunities for early childhood education.
2. To improve early childhood education, focusing on developmental needs and the continuity of learning from preschool to elementary school.

3. To foster the professional development of kindergarten teachers.
4. To regenerate and empower home and community education by preschool institutions.
5. To regenerate and empower home and community education by strengthening a policy that supports both lifelong learning and work.
6. To utilize human resources in the community.
7. To reinforce the support base for early childhood education in the community.

From Early Childhood Education to School Education

Emphasis must be placed on a curriculum, environment, and a support system based on child development and learning continuity, focusing on the transition from learning through play during early childhood to learning set subjects in elementary school. During early childhood, children encounter many people, things, and events, and accumulate experiences through play and everyday life experiences. These experiences foster “sprouts” that contribute to a base for further learning about life and study in school, self-development, and morality. Teachers must recognize the sprout within each child, and construct an appropriate environment for its growth. Continuity in the preschool and school curriculums is needed, and it is especially important to consider the transition period prior to starting elementary school. The 2004 Report of the Central Council for Education proposed an interchange of personnel, a program that connected and led to collaborative activities between kindergarten and elementary schoolteachers, and encouraged the implementation of model schools. Based on these proposals, the Curriculum Research Center of the National Institute for Educational Policy Research published a guide called “From early childhood education to elementary school education” (February 2005).

Quality Improvement and the Expertise of Kindergarten Teachers

The Central Council for Education has indicated that to improve the quality of teachers and their expertise, there is a need for the improvement of training, the promotion of participation in training, and a study of measures to increase the number of teachers possessing a bachelor’s degree. In response to the “Early Childhood Education Promotion Program” by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, a study of improving the quality of kindergarten teachers was conducted. The report in 2002 presented the following points as expertise required of kindergarten teachers:

- The ability to understand children’s thinking and to comprehensively instruct them.
- The ability to make and implement plans.
- The fostering of teachers’ own speciality, cooperativeness as a member of the teachers’ group.
- The ability to respond to children who need special educational consideration.
- The ability to promote collaboration between elementary schools and day-care centers.
- The ability to build relations with guardians (parents) and the community.
- Leadership displayed by executive officers, such as a principal.
- An understanding on human rights.

One approach to improving the quality of teachers has been voluntary in-service training efforts. In particular, the importance has been stressed of enriching training both within and outside kindergartens, of designing training based on amount of teaching experience (newly appointed teachers, young teachers, mid-level teachers, executive officers), and of focusing training on a diverse set of needs (for example, instruction of disabled children, consultation on child raising, attitude and mentality needed for counseling, etc.). Collaboration between the field of early childhood education and universities engaged in the preparation of kindergarten teachers is very important, and the role of such universities is significant.

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Takako Noguchi

South Africa

Early Childhood Education in South Africa

Introduction

In South Africa, early childhood development (ECD) is the term used for “the processes by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially.” According to the 2001 Census there are approximately 8.3 million children in this age group: 5,418,204 from 0–5 years, and 2,872,254 from 6–9 years.

South Africa still faces formidable challenges in addressing the rights and needs of her children. Racist colonial and apartheid policies have left socioeconomic imbalances between black and white and rural and urban South Africans. There is high unemployment and many households live with the stresses of hunger, the lack of formal housing, and high levels of crime and violence including sexual abuse. Many children die of preventable diseases, with the under 5 mortality rate averaging 59.4 per 1000 in 1998. The revised projection for 2002 was 100 per 1000, attributed to the toll of the rising HIV/AIDS pandemic. The migrant labor system and rapid urbanization have eroded traditional family structures, and poverty-stricken female-headed households are common. At an overall prevalence of 29.5 percent, HIV/AIDS is a serious threat impacting on the livelihoods and family structure, with the burden of caring for children in badly affected regions falling upon the elderly and increasingly on older siblings. Many caregivers have low levels of literacy, making it difficult for them to fully support their children’s early education.

History

In South Africa, provision for the care and education of young children outside the home was initiated last century by the community, parents, and welfare organizations. By 1940 there was limited state support, with per capita subsidies paying for full day centers under the auspices of social welfare and

approved nursery schools from education departments. *Crèches* (day-care centers) were seen as custodial and nursery schools as primarily educational. Because subsidies did not keep up with inflation, centers had to rely more and more on fees to cover costs. Nursery schools with trained teachers became privileged middle-class institutions, while *crèches* serving working-class children could only afford basic custodial care. This reinforced white privilege and black disadvantage.

When the apartheid Nationalist government came to power in 1948, they were not in favor of provision for young children before school. Until 1969 government policy discouraged the development of early childhood services except for limited service provision for poor white children through differential per capita education subsidies based on parent income and the introduction of parent income limits for a welfare subsidy.

Provision for white children expanded considerably in the 1970s and there was some development in other communities in response to the Head Start movement in the United States and Non Governmental Organization (NGO) initiatives funded by international foundations.

Because of the lack of state involvement in ECD the community and a variety of NGOs shouldered most of the burden of providing ECD services. During the 1980s and 90s a substantial number of NGO providers were set up to provide in-service training for community-based ECD teachers.

After their election in 1994 the democratic African National Congress (ANC) government identified children's rights, which included ECD, as a key area in the process of reconstruction and development. The last decade has seen the evolution and ongoing development of new policies aimed at promoting the rights of young children and career paths of ECD teachers. These policies are excellent, but the challenge to find resources and capacity to support implementation on the ground is great.

Coordination of Services

Government departments with key responsibility for the provision of services to children in this age group are education, social development (welfare), and health. The health and welfare departments focus on children up to five years. While education is concerned with the full 0-9 years and its policies reflect this, its priority has been to provide a Reception Year for children from 5 years, mostly within public primary schools. An integrated plan for servicing 0- to 4-year-olds has recently been developed by the three departments. This provides for a range of health, social support, and stimulation programs focusing on children at home as well as those in centers.

Policy

Democratic government policy in South Africa needed to address decades of racially discriminatory policies affecting the majority of children in South Africa. Values underpinning our policies include access, redress, equity, quality, and democratic governance.

Education White Paper 1 in 1995 defined government's commitment both to working interdepartmentally and to young children, starting with the phasing in of a Reception Year as part of compulsory schooling. An Interim ECD policy followed in 1996, and a National Pilot to investigate the phasing in of a reception year, accreditation of teachers and training providers. Recommendations from the pilot were the basis for the 2001 Education White Paper 5 on ECD. This provided for the phasing in of the reception year for children turning 5, prioritizing the poorest of the poor. It is intended that all 5-year-olds will be in Grade R classes by 2010. For children younger than this, the White paper prioritized the development of the strategic plan for intersectoral collaboration, with education focusing on program curriculum and quality. Education policy includes a focus on very young children with disabilities to allow for early identification and intervention but children with disabilities make up as little as 1.4 percent of children attending ECD facilities. Children from 5 and a half to 6 years are eligible to attend compulsory primary schooling, which is governed by the South African Schools Act of 1996.

Within welfare policy, provision of appropriate early childhood development services, including day care, parent education and support, is considered to be an important measure, which facilitates the optimum development of children and their families. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1996) prioritises services for disadvantaged children under five years and they are the targets for receipt of child-care subsidies. Though the subsidies are well targeted to the poor, given the total numbers of young children likely to be at risk, the number of children receiving subsidies is very low. A child support grant for children up to 14 years in poor families is another support mechanism.

The Child Care Act of 1983, which will be replaced by the Children's Act (currently before parliament), provides that regular care and partial care services for more than six children not in a school should be registered with social services. Registration is contingent upon meeting the Guidelines for ECD services which define minimum standards for the physical facilities, health and nutrition, educational and management aspects of a day-care program. A health clearance certificate is required from local authorities.

The Department of Health provides free health care for pregnant women and children under 6 years and for older children whose carers earn below a certain threshold. Young children are a priority in the Integrated Nutrition Policy. This includes food fortification, nutrition education and growth monitoring, parasite control and food supplementation to malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women. Food support is available to children in public primary schools through the Primary School Nutrition Program.

Access and Supply

ECD services can be a significant support to children in difficult circumstances but in South Africa there are vast disparities in access to provision on grounds of race (population group) with African children having the lowest access overall. Rural areas, where 70 percent of poor children live, have only 40 percent of all ECD facilities. (Under the apartheid state, people were classified by race—white,

colored (persons of mixed origin), Asian or African, which was further categorized by ethnicity. These politically imposed terms were used to socially mark people for a variety of purposes. The term “black” is used in this entry to refer collectively to all population groups other than white.) Overall enrollment in approximately 23,500 ECD centers audited nationwide in 2000 was 16 percent. This ranged from 8 percent and 10 percent in two of the poorest, rural provinces to 25 percent and 26 percent in the wealthiest and most developed Western Cape and Gauteng provinces. Access to services increases with age with only 5 percent of children under 3 in centers compared to 15 percent of children aged 3–5 and 21 percent aged 5 to 7.

Teacher Preparation

In the past the majority of ECD teachers were trained by NGOs and their qualifications were not formally recognized. All accredited education and training now falls under the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). This was set up in 1995 to develop and implement a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is the framework on which qualifications and courses are registered and against which learner achievements are recorded. ECD qualifications can be obtained from a range of providers—private, nongovernmental, further education and training colleges as well as universities—who are accredited by a quality assurance body appointed by SAQA. A challenge is crediting the prior learning of the many experienced teachers who did not have access to accredited training in the past. Qualifications have been registered at several levels but there is little specialized ECD training at the higher levels, especially postgraduate. Teachers training for primary schooling require a four-year degree as a minimum but there are many under-qualified black teachers from the apartheid era who require upgrading.

Financing

Most ECD provision for all ages is run by welfare organizations, NGOs, community-based organizations, and private providers. Parental fees are the primary source of income for many centers, which in poor communities puts ECD facilities in a precarious position. Due to lack of resources, the quality of much of the provision is less than optimal as many of the centers are poorly equipped, teachers are untrained, and conditions may be unhygienic. The nearly 53,000 teachers of children prior to Grade 1 earn very low salaries; 44 percent earn less than R 500 per month (approximately \$77) and another 30 percent between R 500 and R 1500 (\$230).

Provincial departments of social development subsidize children from 0 to 4 years in some registered centers on a per capita basis per attendance day and this varies from R 2 to R 6 (\$0.31 to \$0.92) across the provinces. In 2004/5 these subsidies were paid to about 20 percent of centers in South Africa. Provincial education payments are made also on a per capita basis of R 3 (\$0.46) per day for up to 200 days per annum to learners in registered Grade R classes. There are also a small number of Grade R teacher posts funded in some provinces. The

numbers of Grade R children subsidized will increase substantially starting with poor schools as Grade R rolls out until there is universal coverage. National norms have been recommended for increased per capita subsidies for both education and social development.

Early Childhood Development Programming

Principles for programming include holistic development of the child, contextually and developmentally appropriate activities, a focus on human rights and values in the curriculum, and opportunities to play and learn informally through experience in a nurturing environment.

There is no prescribed curriculum for children under five years though the Department of Education plans to test and introduce curriculum guidelines for under fours. There are concerns in both the government and NGO sector that the requirements and delivery may be overly formal for such young children. ECD service guidelines reflect the need for stimulating activities as well as provision for health and nutrition.

Curriculum for 5-year-olds forms part of the Revised National Curriculum Statement for the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3 or approximate ages 5-9 years). The focus is given to literacy, numeracy, and lifeskills programs. South Africa follows an outcomes based education (OBE) system that clearly defines the outcomes to be achieved at the end of the learning process with grade-related assessment standards. Outcomes for each learning area are based on achieving a set of critical and developmental outcomes that focus on producing learners with knowledge, skills, and values for productive engagement in the workforce and a democratic and caring society.

Early Childhood Development and the Family

Building partnerships between home, preschool, and the early years of primary schooling is recognized as important in supporting children's development. However, there are challenges in establishing partnerships. Many parents lack the time, confidence, or understanding to be involved in their children's early education. Many teachers do not value parent input or are uncertain how to involve parents. For these and other reasons parents, especially those living in poorer communities, are not generally involved in the schools their children attend. When they are they are most often involved in fundraising and maintenance rather than the educational program.

The other aspect of partnership with families is to reach the majority of children who are not accessed by center-based services. Programs targeting primary caregivers and supporting them in their role as educators and providers for their young children have been developed and run by NGOs for many years. In poor communities the outreach workers involved in these programs play an essential role in linking parents with resources such as clinics, social grants, and income generation as well as focusing on developing their knowledge of how to support early learning. Recently, as part of extension of government programs to

children under 5, the departments of health, social development, and education are planning a strong focus on parenting. But this is still at the planning stage.

There has also been a focus on educational media programs for young children, of which Takalani Sesame, the South African version of Sesame Street, an initiative of the SABC, Department of Education and Children's Television Workshop, is the best known. As well as television and radio components it has an outreach arm that trains parents and teachers to use the programs to enhance the development of their young children.

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Linda Biersteker

Poverty and Young Children in South Africa

Many of the roots of child poverty in South Africa were firmly planted by the Apartheid government in its disenfranchising policies of underdevelopment and poor education.

The 2000 South African Income and Expenditure Survey was used to quantify the extent of child poverty from a monetary point of view. Two poverty lines were used to calculate child poverty at national and provincial levels. These are slightly higher than the international standard of \$1 and \$2 per person per day. Using the higher line, 74.9 percent of children aged 0 to 17 in South Africa are poor—more than 13 million children. With the lower poverty line, 54.3 percent of children across South Africa are ultrapoor—some 9.7 million children.

Poverty is not evenly distributed across the nine provinces in South Africa. The provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo together were home to 60 percent of South Africa's income-poor children. These provinces all include the previous "homeland states," entities established by the South African government under apartheid to deny South African citizenship and rights to the black majority. They were overcrowded, and had bloated and corrupt administrations. These rural areas are significantly underdeveloped.

The biggest single contributor to household poverty is the very high rate of unemployment, which has been on the increase since South Africa opened its economy after the end of Apartheid. The official unemployment figures of September 2004 show that 26.2 percent of the economically active population was unemployed. Given the Apartheid legacy of racial discrimination, employment levels are highly differentiated by race. Black South Africans who make up 79 percent

of the population have a 31.3 percent unemployment rate, whereas the same rate for white South Africans is only 5.4 percent.

These unemployment statistics are only a partial reflection of the work situation in South Africa. A more useful expanded definition of unemployment includes those people who would like to find employment but are discouraged work seekers. On this calculation, unemployment levels are at 41 percent in South Africa.

While there are large numbers of children living in absolute poverty, South Africa, a middle-income country, is also marked by stark inequalities. The United Nations Human Development Report 2004 includes a range of indicators of inequality. South Africa is ranked 119th out of 177 countries reflected in the report with a Gini coefficient of 59.3. (The Gini coefficient is a commonly used measure of how evenly or unevenly income is distributed within a nation). The poorest 20 percent of South Africans have access to only 2 percent of income.

The extent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as the government's weak response to it, have deepened poverty. While there is a comprehensive plan for prevention campaigns and to provide medication to those infected, a lack of political will and weak health services infrastructure have hampered delivery, particularly of Antiretroviral therapy. The best data on the impact of HIV/AIDS comes from the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA) model. Estimates of the spread of HIV/AIDS for 2004 derived from this model are that 5 million South Africans of a total population of 44.8 million are currently infected. An estimated 63,000 children were infected at birth or in the course of breastfeeding in 2004. This is in contrast to some one million babies born uninfected. The model also estimates that in the same year some 245,000 children from birth to fourteen years were HIV positive or had AIDS defining illnesses. AIDS has made a substantial difference to infant mortality with 40 percent of child deaths (IMR) attributable to HIV/AIDS.

A useful indicator of the impact of the pandemic is that of maternal orphans, defined as children from birth to eighteen years who have lost either their mother or both parents. Currently there are some 1.2 million such children in South Africa, more than 600,000 of whom were orphaned by the AIDS pandemic. Projections are that, without significantly increased access to treatment for adults with HIV/AIDS, this number will increase significantly, rising to nearly 2 million by 2015. There can be no doubt that many of the gains made since the advent of democracy are being reversed by the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Impact of Poverty on Young Children

According to calculations made from 2001 census data, in that year there were 8.3 million children from birth to eight years in South Africa, comprising some 18.5 percent of the total population of the country. The most basic manifestation of poverty and inequality is the lack of household food security. The best source of information on food security and hunger is somewhat out of date—the 1999 National Food Consumption Survey in children aged 1 to 9 in South Africa. The situation of children in terms of hunger was not good in 1999. This study found that at the national level, 52 percent of children aged 1 to 9 experienced hunger.

A further 23 percent were at risk of hunger. Only 25 percent appeared to be food secure.

Poor households that are characterized by greater numbers of very young or school-going children also have less access to essential services such as water and sanitation, communications, roads and energy sources, particularly in rural areas. They also have long distances to travel to access health facilities. A vigorous government program to upgrade access to basic services such as water and sanitation has increased the percentage of people with access to a safe water supply from 60 percent in 1994 to 91 percent by March 2004 and basic sanitation from 49 percent to 64 percent.

Poverty impacts on the very structure of children's lives. As well as material poverty, poverty has social and power manifestations. Family life is most fragmented for the poor. In many poor households fathers are absent or children live apart from their parents. There is evidence that protracted physical poverty leads to social isolation of families. Poor children are more likely to grow up in communities wracked by crime and violence.

Government Strategies to Combat Poverty and Ensure Development

The South African government is acutely aware of the problems of poverty and joblessness, and antipoverty rhetoric is prominent in public life. The years of democracy have seen a number of strategies to combat poverty—some of which specifically focused on children.

In 1994, the Reconstruction and Development Programme announced a series of lead projects aiming to extend the reach of the public service into previously neglected communities. In 1996, the African National Congress government introduced the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) policy. Its primary objective was to stimulate growth by opening the economy, reducing public expenditure and attracting foreign direct investment, and by that means, reducing poverty. The majority of the targets of the strategy were not met. GEAR projections ended in 2001, and since then, no other unified national strategy around trade or expenditure has been announced. There has however been a substantial shift toward increased social expenditure since the end of the GEAR period.

While these macroeconomic policies were being put into place, a wide range of programs aimed at developing communities that were without housing and services were initiated, and massive institutional reform took place to unify and standardize education, health, and municipal services.

In 1998, the state introduced the Child Support Grant, a small noncontributory poverty-targeted cash grant paid monthly to the primary caregiver of the child. Initially, children from birth to six were eligible. Since 2000, this grant has been rolled out to older children so that children under 14 are now eligible. Some 5.5 million poor children now have access to some measure of income support in this very successful program.

Since 1994, there have been large-scale programs aimed at improving the living conditions of children and others. One of the first policy announcements was the introduction of free public health care to children under 6 and pregnant women.

This has since been extended to free primary health care for all children and adults, and free secondary and tertiary care for children with disabilities. There have been similarly large-scale interventions in housing, with over one million new houses built for low-income families. There are however problems with the quality of these houses, their location, and their tiny size.

With respect to education and early childhood development services, the record of government in addressing the needs of children to the age of 9 is mixed. In the formal schooling sector including primary school and the recently introduced Grade R, a number of interventions have been inadequately financed and managed. Although school enrollment is high in South Africa, in the region of 95 percent at the primary school level, attendance is much lower. Efforts to support learners to attend school include the School Fee Waiver policy and the Primary School Feeding Scheme.

Initiatives to support children before their schooling years have been very weak and have not been a significant component of the government's poverty alleviation strategy, though plans to expand the system and make more resources available are before Cabinet. Outside the primary school environment under the Education Department, all services to children fall under the Department of Social Development. The expansion of the social safety nets to children and adults has squeezed out funding for social services, which have received very little attention. There is an almost total lack of family support interventions for parents with young children. Those early childhood development (ECD) services that do exist are facilities based but poorly supported in the poorest communities. Some facilities that are able to register receive a per child per day allocation based on parental income levels which varies in different provinces. This is a contribution toward staff salaries, educational activities, and nutrition. The majority of ECD facilities are however, unable to register because of norms and standards that do not take the living conditions in rural areas, informal settlements and inner-city areas into account. Lack of funding can mean poor or no nutrition offered to the children and lack of educational equipment but more seriously impacts on the wages earned by the educators leading to high attrition from the sector, and in many cases low motivation. Facilities in poor communities have significantly poorer infrastructure in the form of buildings, water, and sanitation and this is especially so of facilities serving African children. Because many ECD facilities operate as small businesses the need to make them financially viable can lead to overcrowding.

Local government's constitutional mandate for ECD provision is ambiguous but there are some signs that ECD is beginning to get more prominence at local government level in some areas, both metropolitan and rural, with priority to young children being seen as a social upliftment and poverty alleviation strategy.

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Annie Leatt

Early Childhood and Violence Exposure

First it is appropriate to provide some definitions. The key concepts are structural, political, and interpersonal violence. Each impacts significantly on early childhood.

Structural violence refers to a political and economic system that excludes people from full participation in society, either by law or by the nature of the economic system. In South Africa under apartheid adults and children were excluded from full participation in society on the basis of color. Education and all other services were racially discriminatory. Community life was segregated. The limited educational opportunities of blacks compromised their life chances in very fundamental ways. It also shaped the young child's perception of those of "other" groups entrenching racist attitudes.

Structural violence can continue in a democracy if the society is highly skewed in terms of a small wealthy group and a very large population living in long-term poverty (as is the case with Brazil and South Africa). In this form of structural violence, the survival, development, protection, and opportunities of the poor child are likely to be severely compromised, particularly when there are inadequate welfare provisions.

South Africa has a strong child rights tradition. The Constitution has a special section (28) that grants children nonderogable rights to social security, protection, shelter, health care services, and education. These provisions provide powerful tools that can be used to advance children's rights. They have led to the provision of child grants for parents who have less than a certain level of income. All children under six are entitled to free health care, as are all older children whose carers earn less than a certain threshold. Free nutrition is provided at means-tested schools and some registered early childhood development (ECD) centers. While there is much that still needs to be done, these provisions certainly offset some of the major threats to early development that are part and parcel of societies that have high Gini coefficients—a commonly accepted marker of a structurally unequal society (see Poverty and Young Children in South Africa).

Political violence is a form of intergroup conflict. In some instances the state is in conflict with a group or groups who use violence against it. It can refer to the violent actions of state forces used to oppress citizens (regardless of whether there is violent opposition or not). Political violence usually refers to intrastate conflict. Classical examples include that between the South African state and liberation forces during the apartheid years; the Irish nationalist—British loyalist conflict in Northern Ireland; and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. All have affected children very deeply in a range of ways.

In South Africa, from the late 1970s through the mid-1990s, thousands of young people were engaged in violent political conflict against the regime. Many more suffered under the lash of political oppression. There were an estimated 51,000 detentions of adults and children without trial between 1984 and 1988. About 24,000 children (the vast majority adolescents), were held in detention without trial in the period 1985 to 1989. Children experienced the terror tactics of the state, including threats, misinformation, smear campaigns, harassment of kin, intrusion into domestic space, as well as teargassing and closure of schools. It was not only the adolescent political activists who were affected by the invasion of schools by the police and the army. Children under the age of 9 were also affected. Their education was disrupted by school closures for long periods. Particularly traumatic, family members disappeared, and were killed. As the political struggle in South Africa intensified, it became ever more public. Teenagers would often lead the assault against the soldiers and police. They would participate in the murder of officials in public places accompanied by large crowds singing and cheering them on.

Generations of South African children therefore grew up in a context of political violence coupled to the structural violence of apartheid racism and poverty. They learnt that violence was an acceptable approach to the resolution of conflict, they lost years of education, and for many the emotional costs of seeing their parents and families suffer were very significant. Nonetheless, it is also true that the majority of these children showed enormous strength under very difficult conditions.

Interpersonal violence refers to that between individuals rather than groups. For children it takes many forms. Direct exposure to direct violence includes bullying in the playground, fights with siblings, and being subjected to violence by those who are charged with their protection and development (caregivers and their teachers). Indirect exposure involves witnessing violence to others (in real life or screen media). Many children witness violence at home and on the streets. While direct exposure has negative outcomes for children, particularly when repeated and severe, witnessing violence, particularly in domestic settings, is deeply disturbing, particularly to young children whose ability to process such events is not yet mature.

Young children in South Africa have suffered exposure to child abuse, and violence and alcohol abuse by their caregivers for many generations. Recent studies have shown that many live in communities in which violence is endemic. Rather than unanticipated, isolated events, the violence often consists of multiple, traumatizing events. For example in one survey conducted in a poor area of Cape Town, 70 percent of 8-year-olds had witnessed violence including murder and domestic violence and other forms of assault, and 47 percent had been victims of assault. A major problem is the chronic shortage of clinical services to deal with these children.

Despite the high levels of violence, it is essential to stress that the majority of young children exposed to violence do not show evidence of major psychological difficulties. This finding is in line with studies conducted elsewhere. While these children are remarkably resilient, this does not mean there is no effect. Many children may be deeply distressed and harbor traumatic memories. However,

they have sufficient internal resources and external supports that prevent the development of psychopathology.

Child abuse is a major source of violence exposure for South African children. Due to the nature of the problem it is not possible to derive accurate figures. Nonetheless it is reasonable to estimate (based on several data sources) that some 20 percent of children experience contact sexual abuse. While police crime statistics are not accurate representations of sexual abuse, they can provide a rough guide. A South African Police Services study of recorded rape indicates that in 1998, 15 percent of South African rape victims were below the age of 12 (prevalence: 130/100,000 of female children under 12 years). These are shocking figures. Again services are limited to a few treatment centers in some major cities.

Partner violence is another serious threat to the well-being of young children. It is well known that their emotional development is compromised by exposure to violence between their carers. A recent representative South African national prevalence study found that at least 20 percent of adults were involved in violent relationships.

While many do not consider physical punishment of children to be "violence," it is. When adults hit one another it is called "assault." When parents hit children, it is called "discipline." The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has consistently argued that physical punishment is a violation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and lobbied that it be outlawed to protect young children. A recent South African household survey showed that 59 percent of parents use corporal punishment and that the most vulnerable age is between 3 and 5.

Exposure to media violence should not be omitted from this discussion. It is worth noting the impact of media violence, particularly television, on the development of violent orientations in the young child. Children under the age of 6 are most likely to mimic screen violence as they are less conscious of fantasy/reality distinctions, and because it is a period in which children can identify with screen heroes in a manner that makes them feel strong and able to overcome difficulties in their own lives.

Implications for the Protection and Development of Young Children

Exposure to violence provides many opportunities for the young to learn violent behavior. At the same time, repeated traumatization is also likely to result in psychological states that are associated with aggressive behavior, particularly in young males. If we are serious about youth violence prevention, young children and their developmental contexts require our focused attention.

One has to start at the level of legislation to create appropriate constitutional and legislative mechanisms for the protection of the most vulnerable in society, in particular the establishment of individual rights and also social rights and protections. In South Africa this has been addressed through the Constitutional process, which includes key protections for the young. At the level of implementation, South Africa has a long way to travel.

Large-scale policy initiatives are not enough however. Many communities, schools and homes remain unsafe for young children. A key intervention is to introduce peace education and nonviolent conflict resolution in schools and ECD

settings. We first have to ensure that they develop and use policies of nonviolence that operate between *all* persons and at all levels. Teachers and other staff need to buy into the policy and model nonviolent conflict resolution for children. Then we need to actively teach children these skills and see that they employ them in the playground. South Africa has moved forward to some extent with such initiatives in the formal primary school setting, but not in preschool settings. Reducing violence in schools and ECD settings lowers the opportunities for the young to learn the acceptability of violence from peers. In addition, if school safety and nonviolence is coupled with training in nonviolent modes of conflict resolution, the young have the opportunity to learn pro-social problem solving, to which they would not otherwise be exposed. Even though it is probable that these interventions do not contribute massively to a reduction in violence, they will in all likelihood provide better outcomes for a proportion of youth.

Finally, it is important to intervene with young children who are at high-risk for violent conduct due to the nature of their temperaments and their family settings (e.g. boys in dysfunctional families in high crime neighborhoods). We know that if a preschool child with a history of persistent aggressive behavior is not assisted in early childhood, the odds are that the pattern will persist. This is particularly likely if the child is troubled and has a dysfunctional parenting situation.

There are a number of well-tested interventions for children in this position. A South African example of an early preventive intervention is Petersen and Carolissen's (2000) early school-based child and parent intervention program for aggressive preschool children. They are intensive programs and therefore are not cheap to implement. However, the cost to society of *not* intervening early and not assisting these children *and* their families is far higher in the long run. This is because these children are likely to develop antisocial behavior, have school problems, and eventually drop out.

In sum, as with other aspects of early childhood intervention, we need to prevent threats to development due to violence while we promote positive non-violent development. Prevention of violence in the ECD setting and the school are priorities for South Africa. These must be complemented with interventions in the home that have been shown to make a difference. Home visiting programs have been shown to work in improving infant emotional outcomes. The work of Cooper and colleagues (2002) is a South African example. Again those that work are labor intensive and don't come cheap. But that is what it takes if we wish to address the impact of both structural and interpersonal violence in developing country settings. Early investment pays long-term dividends.

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Andrew Dawes

Child Health and Well-Being in South Africa

Children's right to nutrition and basic health care services is guaranteed by the South African Constitution, and young children up to the age of 5 are prioritized in health policies. Targets are guided by international agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals and World Fit for Children. High poverty rates impact negatively on the survival and health of young children in South Africa and the HIV/AIDS crisis has severely worsened the situation.

Current Indicators of Child Health in South Africa

According to the Demographic and Health Survey in 1998 the infant mortality rate (IMR) was 45.4 per 1000 and under five mortality rate 59.4 per 1000 live births. The national figure conceals wide geographic differences with far higher rates in the poorer rural provinces (urban 43.2 and rural 71.2) and population group differences with African children having the highest mortality rates (white children 15.3 and African 63.6). Between 1998 and 2002 estimates are that IMR increased by 14 per 1000 almost exclusively because of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The under 5 mortality rate almost doubled to 100 per 1000.

Leading causes of death include intestinal infection, lower respiratory infection, unnatural causes, and HIV. Malnutrition accounts for about 6 percent of child

deaths. In 2003 the Department of Health reported immunization coverage of 82 percent for one-year-olds, but here too there is regional variation with lower rates in poor rural provinces. For children 12–23 months cover drops to 63.4 percent.

Stunting is the most common form of malnutrition. The 1999 National Food Consumption Survey showed that 21.6 percent of children aged 1–9 are stunted compared with 10.3 who are underweight for age. Younger children aged 1–3 are most severely affected as well as those living on commercial farms (30.6%) and in tribal and rural areas. Obesity is a growing problem for about 7.5 percent of children aged 4–9, predominantly in formal urban areas.

There is a serious tuberculosis epidemic that is increasing at about 20 percent per annum as a result of its association with HIV infection. In the more northerly and north-east provinces such as KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga malaria rates are high.

HIV and AIDS are a dire threat to the survival and well-being of very large and growing numbers of young children in South Africa. In 2004, 29.5 percent of pregnant women tested at public facilities were HIV positive. An estimated 6 percent of babies are infected peri-natally through mother-to-child transmission. Far greater numbers of children have their survival and well-being compromised through growing up in houses where breadwinners and caregivers are infected or have died. Young children are most developmentally vulnerable to deprivation of consistent, responsive care, adequate nutrition, and interpersonal and environmental stimulation. Children from households perceived to be HIV/AIDS affected are often stigmatized impacting negatively on their self-esteem and other factors that promote resilience.

State Initiatives to Address the Health of Young Children

Child health and nutrition are high on the list of the government's priorities. The new government has introduced a number of significant policies to redress inequities in the allocation of health resources and to improve maternal and child health care. These include the Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP), more recently, the national Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP) for South Africa, Free Health Care for pregnant women and children under six years, the Expanded Programme of Immunisation, and Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI).

The INP includes fortification of staple foods, promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, community-based growth monitoring, developing community food gardens, and nutritional supplementation. For children in public schools the PSNP provides a nutritious snack. This is not available to Grade R classes in community schools or for younger children and there are difficulties accessing nutritional supplementation and emergency food aid in many districts.

In response to HIV/AIDS the Department of Health launched its strategic plan in 2000. This framework for responding to the epidemic has four priority areas including Prevention; Treatment, Care and Support; Research, Monitoring and Surveillance; and Human Rights. Of particular relevance for 0- to 8-year-olds are Reduction of Mother-to- Child HIV Transmission and Expanding the Provision of Care to Children and Orphans.

In the same year the Departments of Health, Social Development and Education, the major social service deliverers in prevention and management, developed a national integrated plan for children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The intervention includes poverty relief, life skills education, and home and community-based care.

A Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV program started in 2001 and operates at a number of public hospitals and community health centers throughout the country. Services include voluntary counseling and testing, advice on infant feeding and use of milk formula as well as general education and support. Prevention of vertical transmission is, however, only one aspect of preventing vulnerability. Providing treatment and support to children's mothers and other caregivers, so they can provide good care for as long as possible, is as important. In April 2004, a national Antiretroviral Therapy treatment program started. However, it has faced numerous challenges, especially in the poorer provinces, and is not rolling out rapidly enough to meet the demand for treatment. Midway through the first year only 11, 000 of a target of 53, 000 people were involved in treatment.

Important aspects of a safety net for all children affected by HIV include improving access to child support grants, which requires children's births to be registered and adults to have identity documents. Securing foster care grants for caregivers of children not their own by birth is a slow statutory process requiring fast tracking.

Apart from the specifically age targeted PMTCT programmes there is little focus in programs on the particular vulnerabilities of very young children affected by HIV and AIDS. Problems of keeping children in school, supporting child headed households and prevention programs aimed at older children and youth have been most common.

The Early Childhood Development Services Response to HIV/AIDS

A number of service responses are emerging to address the situation of young children made vulnerable by HIV. An obvious target group is those children in early childhood development (ECD) centers and the early grades of primary schooling, but there is a need also for broader outreach to the majority of young children not reached by these services.

Early childhood development center programs. There are many training courses to teach ECD teachers and caregivers to deal with affected children in their centers. These involve information to dispel myths about HIV, training about universal precautions, and how to provide emotional support to children coping with trauma. Some of these can be credited to a national qualification in ECD. However there are many recorded cases of reluctance to accept children suspected of being HIV positive into centers because of fear and stigma. Practitioners could play a far more strategic role in identifying children at risk and linking them with resources if they had additional information and support. ECD centers could provide safe care, security, and stimulation for young children traumatized by sickness and death. When young children attend ECD programs parents and caregivers are

released to attend to survival needs, and older children who are caring for the young ones to go to school. This would only be possible with greater subsidy support for children attending ECD centers.

Outreach programs. Young children made vulnerable by poverty or household illness are among those least likely to attend preschools centers or schools. A number of programs are attempting to reach these children, who are outside of the service loop. The family and community has traditionally been the safety net for young children but is stretched to breaking point, with elderly caregivers and child heads of households particularly in need of support.

Common principles on which these programs are based include a rights-based approach to programming, a broad focus on vulnerable children, as targeting of orphans or HIV affected children can increase stigmatisation, and building on the capacity of communities to care for affected children and link them with resources. The value of combining academic knowledge and more traditional knowledge bases in addressing the impact of the pandemic is recognized.

The Training and Resources in Early Education's (TREE) Integrated ECD Projects in areas of KwaZulu Natal provide an example. These aim to promote the physical well-being of children as well as strengthening their resilience through psychosocial support and linking them to all support services available to them. This involves providing information and support to all adults who interact with young children and may include assistance in getting identity documents, accessing grants and nutritional support as well as initiating stimulating play activities for young children. The program aims to build community-based management to support the needs of vulnerable young children by doing the following:

- Strengthening families
- Lobbying local leadership and local government
- Linking with ECD practitioners
- Establishment of community child care committees with representation of major stakeholders and responsible for identification and monitoring of particularly vulnerable households in their community
- Use of volunteer family facilitators to build caregiving capacity at household level
- Linking with a wide range of public services for children and people in the community: for example, welfare, health, agriculture, policing.

Media programs. Media projects have great potential to influence attitudes as well as providing information. Takalani Sesame, which has radio, television, and outreach materials, has introduced an HIV positive Muppet, Kami, as a member of the cast. It aims to provide age-appropriate messages for children aged 3–7 years assisting young children, parents, and caregivers with knowledge and skills to deal with the pandemic.

Meeting the rights and needs of South Africa's young children in the face of the enormous and devastating effects of HIV/AIDS requires the dedication of South Africa's human resources to fighting a full-scale war against the pandemic. Sustainable initiatives to identify, support, and monitor vulnerable children in communities must include the people, leaders, and government, have a common

focus to which all partners are committed, access to resources and be strongly driven over a sustained period of time.

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Linda Biersteker and Victoria Sikhakbana

Family Involvement in Early Childhood Development in South Africa

South African children grow up in very diverse family and household structures. South African society includes a multiplicity of religious and cultural beliefs, kinship patterns, and economic structures. Traditional family structures of black South Africans have been profoundly altered by the institutionalized state racism of the apartheid era and colonial past. Labor policies often separated black fathers and mothers from their families, leaving grandmothers, aunts, and older sisters in parenting roles. Increasing urbanization of young adults and the impact of HIV and AIDS are also creating different family structures. Many households are in a constant state of flux, with children moving between relatives most able to care for them at particular times in their lives. Female-headed households are increasingly common with less than half of African children living with both parents.

Parent education levels are strongly associated with the well-being of children, their survival rates, and capacity to support children in their schooling. The 2001 Census revealed that 18 percent of the population was categorized as functionally illiterate and this group included more women, who are most often primary caregivers, than men. Many parents lack the knowledge, confidence, and material resources to support their children's education even in the preschool years; therefore, many children do not attend school or drop out in the early grades.

A National Indicator Project for the Department of Education showed that very large numbers of children are living in families that lack resources, including food and educational materials. Recent studies and newspaper reports have indicated that even in urban areas, literacy is a peripheral activity in the home and that most

children from disadvantaged homes start school with no experience of books or word play.

Policy towards Families and Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Within a short period of time, South Africa has moved toward the incorporation of a human rights and child rights approach to early childhood development policy formation and programming, as embodied in the South African Constitution.

Early childhood development (ECD) policy from the Department of Education stresses the importance of continuity between the home, preschool, and early years of schooling. It also recognizes the importance of parental involvement as seen, for example, in the composition requirements for School Governing Bodies and is committed in the Revised National Curriculum to support learning by the use of local content and building on the child's own experience. The Department of Social Development policies and programs for ECD also contain a commitment to education of parents as part of a range of strategies to prevent children becoming "at risk." New ECD related programs, such as the Integrated ECD Plan, include a focus on parent education. Additionally, the Expanded Public Works Program includes a provision for training parents.

Different Types of Parent and Family Services

While training for ECD practitioners incorporates components for working with parents, only one in twenty young children in South Africa is in preschool facilities or Grade R classes. The challenge for parent and family services is to reach those children outside of provision. Therefore, family programs for ECD include those servicing parents of children in schools and preschools, a number of programs that directly target the primary caregivers of young children who are not in any ECD facility, and more general awareness and media programs for parents.

The Challenges in Forming Links between Home and School

Parents who have low levels of schooling themselves often lack understanding of ECD and are uncomfortable with the play-centered learning activities associated with ECD programs, feeling more at ease with rote-centered learning practices. Those parents who received more formal education often associate school with formal instruction where teachers set the rules. It is likely that these parents have never experienced a productive and interactive parent-teacher relationship.

Experience of a Parent Support Program in a rural township in the Free State province showed that teachers who regarded themselves as "experts" tended to alienate poor parents. A well-designed short training program, incorporating sensitivity to social realities and cultural norms for both teachers and parents, led to improved relationships between the two groups. The program increased the parents' awareness of the role of early stimulation and the links to later schooling.

Involvement of parents as governing bodies for community-based preschools is well established, as is the teacher's expectation that parents should be involved in

fundraising events and maintenance. Involvement as a support in the classroom is less common, though it has been used very effectively to promote diversity in some programs.

In low-income urban areas, teachers often struggle to secure parent attendance at meetings. This is often a result of time pressures on parents, safety issues in attending meetings in the evenings and a lack of understanding of the importance of their role as parents, something to which teachers often contribute.

In rural areas, where preschools exist, parents are often more involved in the preschools because of the strong social networks where people know one another. However, parent interest and involvement in the education program is more common for parents in more affluent communities.

Awareness Programs

The South African Broadcasting Corporation Educational TV and radio programs include parent education as part of the strategy for educating parents about support for very young children. An estimated 84 percent of South Africans have access to radio and daily radio programs. Some programs, such as Takalani Sesame, include an outreach component with training and print materials targeting primary caregivers as well as ECD teachers. Many local and community radio stations feature parent information or phone-in advice programs for parents of young children. The Department of Education has recently undertaken a media campaign to raise awareness of the importance of supporting early childhood development.

Donor sponsored newspaper supplements, especially for the early years of primary school, are a regular feature in the press. In addition, health and social grant related information in the form of posters and pamphlets are distributed at public places where parents are likely to gather—clinics, social work offices, NGOs, libraries.

Programs Aimed at Primary Caregivers

In an attempt to provide supportive programming for the primary caregivers and parents of young children, and to offer early childhood information that is sensitive to sociocultural differences, a range of programs are available. Unfortunately, most of these programs are only available in urban areas. Program strategies include toy libraries, library programs, mother-child groups, play in the park programs, ECD sports programs and support for informal playgroups. For-profit parenting training programs and parent support groups such as moms and tots groups are common in more affluent communities.

The greatest need addressed here is to reach the parents of children who are very poor, or in areas that are poorly resourced. In response to this need a number of good practice examples have been developed in the NGO sector. These services have a holistic focus, helping parents access resources such as social security, food, and a component that brings them information about early childhood development. However, budget constraints continually limit access for large numbers of vulnerable families and children.

The *family motivator*, the foot soldier in ECD strategy, is gaining momentum as a mechanism for reaching young children in areas that lack a developed physical infrastructure. This approach has been pioneered by NGOs and most often relies on facilitators and volunteers from communities who visit households to provide support and information. Primary caregivers may be brought together for ECD-related workshops. These events help build a network of social support. A related program, known as the ECD hub, involves either a preschool, community, or health center and it strives to become a one-stop shop by bringing together a range of services that include social welfare (access to grants), safety, and protection.

An example of the integration needed is a family outreach program in seven villages in the Northern Cape (an area of deep poverty, violence, and crime). To be successful, several important components needed to be incorporated. First, there needed to be a solid family support service within the community structures, as this facilitated increased access to health services, child support grants, and pensions. Secondly, dialogue and problem-solving approaches to learning and teaching strengthened ECD understandings and practice among primary caregivers, ECD, health and community development practitioners.

Communicating the Early Childhood Development Message to Parents

Linking ECD with other family development programs is one strategy for communicating the ECD messages to parents. For example a Family Literacy program in the KwaZulu Natal Province offers rural women literacy and English and key early childhood development messages, particularly around child early literacy and HIV/AIDS. In other projects, a child-care and education component has been linked to income generation projects targeting women, including a national public works program called Working for Water.

Library services, where such services exist, sometimes include toy lending and lap programs, designed to encourage parents to read to their young children. Projects that encourage a culture of reading include the development of indigenous language books for young children. These books focus on South African themes and have been distributed to parents, preschools, and libraries. However, the majority of children are growing up in an environment where print material is not available.

Child-to-child programs have worked well in certain areas. For example, primary school-aged children in an area of KwaZulu Natal were guided to take key health messages back to the homes and to check young children's clinic cards. This initiative significantly improved the immunization rates in their villages. In Cape Town, older children have been trained to make play materials from waste and shown how to use these with younger children in their homes.

Challenges

ECD parent/family programs often lack both the capacity and the resources for systematic data collection and analysis; therefore, the opportunity to influence

government policy and programming is lessened. ECD seldom shows up in Integrated Development Plans and budgets at the local government level. Advocacy efforts need to be strengthened and gain wider support in order to ensure the place of a truly holistic ECD on the national agenda. Parent and family services, provided mostly by the nongovernmental sector, remain hard pressed to deliver widely without systematic and sustained government and donor support.

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Mary Newman

Human Rights, Inclusivity, and Social Justice

South Africa has a rich diversity of culture, language, and religious traditions. However, we come from a history of oppression where one culture was viewed as superior to others. For decades a minority white and Western culture dominated and was institutionalized as the norm. Other cultures were practiced in local segregated communities.

Since the beginning of our democracy in 1994, the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights have been the guide for national and provincial laws and policies across government departments, civil society structures, and organizations. Both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights have been a means for the transformation of our society. To develop an understanding of human rights issues, there is a strong emphasis on human rights awareness and education in South Africa. As a result, government institutions, corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and community-based organizations have developed visions, missions, and policies to align themselves with the South African Constitution. Over the last ten years national pride has also emerged as our society celebrates its diverse cultures, languages, and traditions. Increasing numbers of Africans from all over the continent have migrated to South Africa, bringing many different traditions. Unfortunately, these new immigrants have become the targets of xenophobia.

Human rights relate to a wide range of diversity, which includes race, gender, culture, ethnicity, class, ability, and language. Transformation also means leveling

the playing fields of the past, which is why the focus of the South African government's laws and policies is human rights, inclusivity, and social justice.

A decade is a very short period of time in any country's history. We face and grapple with many challenges when it comes to looking at issues of diversity in the education of young children. These challenges include the following:

- More than 80 percent do not have access to child-care facilities and come from the poor section of our communities;
- Lack of qualified teachers and facilities;
- Educational stimulation by and large in the hands of families and our poor communities;
- Development and empowerment of our communities in advocacy around issues related to the education of young children.

As duty bearers, across all levels of our South African society, we are responsible for early childhood education. We need to continue to work toward ensuring all our children are included and reap the benefits of our democracy.

Winds of Change

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been involved at the forefront as agents of change even before 1994. NGOs actively challenged discriminatory policies and practices, which excluded the majority of the children in South Africa. The Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU) in Cape Town pioneered antibias work for the early childhood sector and has been involved in antibias work since 1990. At the time, formerly all white schools were starting to enroll African, colored, and Indian children. In the changing of our history, this was the right thing to do, if you could afford it. It was a very assimilationist approach and in practice it was a challenge.

Faced with this more diverse enrollment, teachers identified language as a major issue. Children from other cultures and racialized groups battled with English, the medium of instruction at these schools, and many did not speak the language at all. For some learners, English was their second, third, or fourth language. Teachers recognized that while the language issue was a reality, it was very closely connected to issues of culture, race, and class. These learners came from different backgrounds and experiences than those of the teachers and many of their classmates. In the words of one author, "the education system treated black children like foreigners in their own country, tending to reflect English or American culture."

The approach ELRU adopted, which drew on the work of Louise Derman Sparks at Pacific Oaks College, California, was to provide skills and support to teachers in implementing an antibias approach. This approach challenges oppressive beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and social and institutional practices. Antibias training does not have an exclusive cultural focus—believing that all forms of bias, discrimination, and oppression need to be challenged and that these intersect in many ways. However, as a result of our history and experiences of apartheid and transformation, racial discrimination still remains a major focus. An antibias approach requires that teachers are aware of their own biases, reflect on these limitations, and find ways of moving forward by changing attitudes and behaviors.

Teacher Training

The transformation of South African society over the last decade has brought about many changes. Laws and policies have been put in place at government, corporate, organizational, and community levels. We have discussed, debated and implemented processes, systems, and policies to develop our democracy. Early childhood education is intertwined with our transformation. As a result, as South Africa grapples with issues related to our past and creates our future, we have elected to view cultural appropriateness in broad terms of a human rights approach.

In response to these challenges, one of the many initiatives taken by the Education Department is a pilot project to train teachers on Values and Human Rights in the Curriculum. This involves a group of teachers in the same district, in each province. These schools come from diverse historical experiences, backgrounds, and situations, use different languages, and include both private and state schools. All grades are included. The training is short but focuses on a process of personal reflection on attitudes on issues of diversity and how those attitudes can influence the interactions in the learning environment. The project also provides each school with a kit of grade-appropriate materials that focuses on values and human rights and can be used across the curriculum. A further departmental pilot involves an Advanced Certificate in Human Rights and Values, offered for teachers at the tertiary level.

The Role of Education Policy

Educators of young children strive to help them develop a positive self-image. Culture is central to this identity. In South Africa, the approach to diversity is developing a culture of human rights and inclusivity that promotes the affirmation of all children, their families and experiences irrespective of difference. It is about recognizing and respecting similarities and differences. From an early age, young children are influenced by societal norms and biases. Often, these children will respond to differences according to the prevailing societal norms they experience in their environment.

The South African government sees education as a key vehicle for achieving real change in our society. Human rights and inclusivity issues are firmly on the National Education Department's agenda as part of the transformation and the infusion of human rights and values in education. In the years since democracy, the antibias approach first tested in the NGO sector, which aims at affirming all of South Africa's children and making education truly inclusive, found expression in several education policy documents. These documents include the South African Schools Act of 1996 which allows instruction in the language of choice, the Language in Education Policy (1997) which promotes additive multilingualism, and White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001) which sets out policies to facilitate inclusion of all children in schools. National standards for accredited training of early childhood teachers include a focus on an inclusive antibias curriculum. Another initiative of the Education Department has been the development of the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001). This initiative examined

what values would reinforce and confirm the learners' critical skills of communication and participation, in nurturing the democratic values of the constitution. Following this, human rights, inclusivity and social justice are highlighted in the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) of 2002 and integrated across all learning areas for all children. The aim is to develop a culture of democracy, human rights, and peace. Developing this involves learning about human rights within a human rights environment and critically engaging issues related to human rights, inclusivity, and social justice—basically putting human rights into practice.

A Culture of Human Rights and Inclusivity in the Classroom

Creating an inclusive human rights approach in education is integral to the program, not simply an add-on. To do this, educators must recognize that we live in a society with prejudices from our past and that we should actively encourage children to challenge their bias and discrimination, to ask questions, to notice unfairness and to challenge it. We need to create learning environments, at home and at school, that provide an alternative to the biased messages that society provides. We need to model that we value diversity and difference in the friends we choose or where we shop, to be positive about each child's physical characteristics and cultural heritage. Educational materials should reinforce the value of different cultures and people that can make children proud of their heritage. Sensitivity to local contexts and interests of children is a key aspect of this orientation. The RNCS is not prescriptive of what should be taught, but rather aims at general outcomes that can be realized through a variety of learning content.

Teachers are urged to provide books, dolls, pictures, posters, stories, songs, and art activities that show different images that the children might not otherwise see. This helps children understand and value differences, and to challenge stereotypes. These may include the following:

- Black women in leadership roles such as chairing a meeting, and white men in laboring jobs such as digging a road.
- Men and women in nontraditional roles for example, a man cooking, a woman in charge of a shop, a man bathing a baby, girls playing with cars, boys feeding baby dolls.
- A variety of different family types that we find in our society: single parent families, large extended families, etc.

Children should have opportunities to play with other children who are different from themselves, for example, children with disabilities, with different religions, who speak different languages. Language diversity is encouraged. Given that many previously oppressed parents view the English language and Western culture as key to the road to economic success, as well as the inevitable inroads of globalization, developing a society which values difference is not without challenges.

Challenges and Opportunities

One of the challenges facing South African teachers is including and infusing human rights knowledge, skills and values into education. This requires a

particular focus and understanding on the part of teachers, for they are responsible for creating a human rights environment in their classroom and in the school. This whole school approach includes the learners, parents, and the community, as active partners in the education of our children. Like many of the parents, the majority of our teachers were educated and trained in an extremely authoritarian, oppressive, and divided era. Transformation requires change or making paradigm shifts through a process of unlearning old and familiar ways of doing things, and creating new ways and democratic perspectives in our interactions with one another as members of our society.

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Beryl Hermanus

Early Childhood Education Curriculum in South Africa

In post *apartheid* South Africa, “curriculum” carries with it connotations of liberation, social change, and transformation in education. *Curriculum 2005* is the new plan for school education. It specifies the “knowledge, skills and attitudes” that children are expected to attain, on a year-by-year basis, from age 5 to 15, in their journey through the formal schooling system. Importantly, as policy, it declines to prescribe either specific content or pedagogic process, deeming these to be the professional responsibility of educators. Instead, policy specifies a range of general (“cross-field”) and subject specific outcomes that can, in principle, be attained along any number of different learning pathways. In this situation, consideration of curriculum is often highly politicized. Besides the usual features that one would consider—subjects, programs, pedagogy, assessment—any analysis of curriculum in South Africa must reflect on the following: its symbolic role in transforming the contents of the racist past, the implementation problems associated with pressures for rapid change, and the question of the right of access to a new curriculum.

Transformation

In 2002, the Department of Education published the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), specifying learning outcomes and assessment standards for learning areas in schools. The first four years of formal schooling are known as the Foundation Phase (Grade R or “reception year,” Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3).

Grade R is not yet but is in principle compulsory, as it is for children aged 6–7 to 8–9 to be enrolled in Grades 1, 2 and 3. The RNCS specifies three learning programs to be followed over the four years, namely Literacy, Numeracy, and Life Skills. Each has a number of specific learning outcomes associated with it. For reasons of limited space, these cannot all be spelled out here, but the examples provided in the table below will portray the current South African curriculum policy.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement

Learning Program	Learning Outcomes (LOs)
Literacy	<p>LO1: <i>Listening</i></p> <p>LO2: <i>Speaking</i></p> <p>“The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in a spoken language in a wide range of situations.”</p> <p>LO3: <i>Reading and viewing</i></p> <p>“The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to aesthetic, cultural, and emotional values in texts.”</p> <p>LO4: <i>Writing</i></p> <p>LO5: <i>Thinking and reasoning</i></p> <p>LO6: <i>Language structure and use</i></p>
Numeracy	<p>LO1: <i>Numbers, operations, and relationships</i></p> <p>“The learner will be able to recognize, describe and represent numbers and their relationships, and to count, estimate, calculate and check with competence and confidence in solving problems.”</p> <p>LO2: <i>Patterns, functions, and algebra.</i></p> <p>LO3: <i>Space and shape (Geometry)</i></p> <p>“The learner will be able to describe and represent characteristics and relationships between two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects in a variety of orientations and positions.”</p> <p>LO4: <i>Measurement</i></p> <p>LO5: <i>Data handling</i></p>
Life skills	<p>In the Foundation Phase, the RNCS requires integration of outcomes from a number of different, distinct learning areas studied in later years of schooling, For example,</p> <p>LO3 from History: <i>Historical interpretation</i></p> <p>“The learner will be able to interpret aspects of history.”</p> <p>LO1 from arts and culture: <i>Creating, interpreting, and presenting</i></p> <p>LO1 from life orientation: <i>Health promotion</i> (which includes <i>inter alia</i> that the learner has an appropriate knowledge of HIV and AIDS).</p>

The entire RNCS document may be viewed at Department of Education (2005).

In addition to such outcome statements, there are specified Assessment Standards associated with each Learning Outcome (LO). For example, one of three assessment standards for Grade R for Literacy LO2 reads, “We know this when the learner uses and responds appropriately to simple greetings and farewells, and thanks people.” One of seven assessment standards for Grade 2 for Literacy LO3 reads, “We know this when the learner recognizes the silent ‘e’ in common

words such as ‘cake’.” And one of six assessment standards for Grade 3 for Numeracy LO1 reads, “We know this when the learner performs mental calculations involving addition and subtraction for numbers to at least 50, and multiplication or whole numbers with solutions to at least 50.”

Important Aspects of the RNCS

The overall RNCS—the official national curriculum—is clearly an extensive and complex document. There are a number of things that one needs to notice about it when considering the transformative aspects of curriculum in South Africa:

- It employs distinctive terminology. “Learning areas” rather than “subjects,” “numeracy” rather than “mathematics,” “learners” rather than “pupils,” and so on. A number of commentators have recognized how this in itself is an assertion of a new curriculum against the prevailing political order, distancing it from the language of the past.
- It does not specify any particular content. This is very much a reaction to the *apartheid* order, in which content tended to be narrowly specified in ways that were blatantly racist, colonial, sexist—white histories, the absence of African perspectives, patriarchal gender stereotyping, etc. For example, one *apartheid* era Grade 1 textbook characterizes “black homes” as being either grass or mud huts and “white homes” as brick and mortar structures. Currently, there is an important debate in South Africa about whether or not this tendency has gone too far, losing sight of what Lee Shulman terms *pedagogic content knowledge*, not least in relation to the particular knowledge that teachers of young children must have regarding the way their learners think about language and mathematics.
- It is driven primarily by assessment criteria. There are well-known “design down” imperatives in outcomes-based education to prioritize assessment in the curriculum process. In South Africa, the leveling of the playing field that “transparent” assessment criteria brings gave impetus to the policy decision to opt for an outcomes-based curriculum and, ultimately, the RNCS. However, there is now a concern that this emphasis on assessment may entail too much surveillance of children, too much of a “check list” mentality on the part of teachers, that detracts from the school’s ability to provide the well-rounded learning process that children require.

Implementation

The RNCS, then, is the major plan for curriculum as it affects children in South Africa. But what of another important perspective on curriculum, that which would view curriculum as practice rather than as plan? Conceived as a plan, a curriculum is understood as official documents from a recognized authority that prescribes what should be taught and achieved in the classroom; conceived as practice, it is a set of guidelines used unevenly by teachers and experienced in different ways by learners. In South African policy debates, this lived experience of curriculum has been characterized as the “curriculum-in-use.” Here, one considers children’s experience as organized by teachers and caregivers, in a focus on the actual implementation of curriculum.

Challenges Associated With Implementation

As pointed out, the RNCS is an enormously complicated document. Unfortunately, South African teachers have often struggled to understand its complex terminology, or have tended to be confused about the design and implementation of the new curriculum. A 2000 commission appointed by the Minister of Education found that “all available evidence [suggests] that although Curriculum 2005 has generated a new focus on teaching and learning, teachers have a rather shallow understanding of [its] principles” (Chisholm 2000, p. 20). In the Foundation Phase, recent research has suggested that teachers tend to have insufficient time for the development of effective reading skills, foundational mathematics, and core concepts in life skills. Other studies have identified the poor conceptual knowledge base of teachers, even in relation to the basic mathematics taught in early primary school years (place value, shape, measurement). There is now widespread agreement amongst educators that curriculum implementation was initially too rushed, and was founded on inadequate teacher training, monitoring, and support for teachers. The upshot of this is that there is a renewed focus on the fundamentals of reading and writing instruction and mathematical computation in the early primary school curriculum in South Africa. This “back to basics” emphasis is perhaps not as dramatic as that in some other countries, notably the United States, but it is nonetheless a significant contemporary trend in curriculum policy.

Innovative Practice

Nonetheless, despite these discrepancies between curriculum as plan and curriculum as practice, there are numerous examples of innovative practice being developed by teachers in Foundation Phase classrooms. Curriculum 2005 has brought about a shift in the understanding of what constitutes good education for young children—an emphasis on the totality of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, without losing sight of the importance of phonemic awareness, for example, or a concern to ensure that children are given the opportunity to construct their own solutions to arithmetic problems, without losing sight of the need to instruct them in certain basic algorithms. The implementation of the new national curriculum continues to inspire various interesting initiatives on the part of many teachers of young children throughout the country.

Access

The RNCS does not engage questions of curriculum for children under the age of 5. A recent national consultative conference on Early Childhood Development (ECD) (March 2005) has put the question of a curriculum for 0–4 year-olds back on the national agenda. However, the government has been frank (and controversial) in declaring that, at this stage, it cannot afford to fund such educational provision. It has called for partnerships with communities, NGOs, and industries to address the curriculum and broader educational needs of these children. As is the case in most developing countries, there has been a concern to ensure universal primary

schooling in South Africa over the past decade. By 2000, the country had a net enrollment ratio of 87 percent in primary schools, still short of its goal. In 2001, it made a move to formalize Grade R education for children aged 5, and declared that its target was to “universalize coverage of the Reception Year, whilst maintaining a significant coverage in earlier years” (Department of Education, 2001, sect 4). Children aged 0–4, however, remain on the outside.

One consequence of the government recognizing Grade R as a formal part of the school curriculum was a renewed sense of the integrity of a curriculum for young children. Demarcating the first four years of schooling as an integrated learning pathway in the RNCS consolidated educational thinking in this area. Ironically, however, a broader sense of curriculum integrity regarding ECD as a whole (ages 0–9) was undermined.

This situation has led to considerable criticism of government and advocacy for improved ECD provisioning on the part of government. NGOs that train caregivers and teachers and that provide various kinds of education and care for young children have been prominent in these efforts. In fact, it is such organizations that have kept alive a concern with curriculum for young children. Their role in South African ECD must be acknowledged. Three examples will make the point, although these are by no means the only significant contributors in the field:

- Since the 1970s, The Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU) in Cape Town has developed contextually appropriate curricula for children in resource poor communities, emphasizing an inclusive anti-bias approach. ELRU provides for babies, toddlers, and 3–6-year-olds, and offers nationally recognized training for practitioners in an extensive community of ECD centers and Grade R classes in public schools.
- The well known High/Scope program delivered by Khululeka in the Eastern Cape has been adapted to meet the unique needs of local community contexts and specific groups of children. Khululeka offers teacher training for basic and nationally recognized certificates in ECD.
- The Woz’obona organization in Johannesburg has since the 1980s developed an adapted **Montessori** curriculum, utilizing sensorial materials fashioned from waste materials. It too trains teachers and caregivers for nationally recognized certificates.

Curriculum for the Under Fives

The “curriculum for the under-fives” in South Africa is concentrated in the hands of twenty or so different NGOs, and straddles a large range of “philosophies” and methodological approaches. This leads to many innovative approaches, but it also means that the overall provisioning for young children remains small in relation to the overall need. A national sense of curriculum in this area, which can go to scale, still seems some way off. There is wide expectation of government that it will, at some point, take the initiative in driving a national agenda in this regard. If it can tap into the wide pool of established curriculum knowledge in South African NGOs, it may well be able to do this. But it requires money, trained people, and political will.

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Ian Moll

Foreign Language Learning in South African Early Childhood Education

Historical Context

South Africa, like most countries on the African continent, is multilingual. Although a minority of children grow up in monolingual English homes, for the vast majority it is usual to speak one or more indigenous African language at home and to learn to understand and communicate in other languages at some point during childhood in more or less formal ways. One or more of these languages, although they may be variously termed "2nd" (L2), "3rd," or the more generic "additional" languages, are often in effect, foreign for many children.

The following table gives the breakdown, based on the 2001 Census, of the home languages of the approximately 45 million South Africans.

Percentage of First Home Language Speakers	
Language	Percentage of First Home Language Speakers
IsiZulu	23.8
IsiXhosa	17.6
Afrikaans	13.3
Sepedi	9.4
English	8.2
Setswana	8.2
Sesotho	7.9
Xitsonga	4.4
Siswati	2.7
Tshivenda	2.3
IsiNdebele	1.6
Other	0.5

English is the language of high status and power in South Africa. Under colonial rule, most African countries came to "choose" a foreign language (such as English,

French, or Portuguese) as the official language. The legacy of this has prevailed and has contributed significantly to a complex and often problematic linguistic situation in society, particularly in the domain of education. In South Africa during the Apartheid years, English and Afrikaans (a language which developed from seventeenth-century Dutch) were enforced as the two official languages. African languages were only used as languages of instruction for the first few years of primary schooling and were the medium through which “Bantu education” (an inferior system of education aimed at keeping black people in lowly positions in society) was initiated. For this reason, many African language speakers still associate the notion of mother tongue education with inferior education.

Post-Apartheid Language in Education Policy

Since the demise of Apartheid, South Africa has 11 official languages and since 1997 a Language in Education Policy (LiEP). The LiEP follows the constitutional obligation to recognize cultural diversity as a valuable asset and to promote multilingualism, the development of African languages and respect for all languages used in the country. On the basis that it assumed its written standard form in South Africa, Afrikaans is now considered to be an African language. In terms of a language in education approach, the LiEP supports and promotes “additive approaches to bilingualism.” Based on research evidence about the benefits of mother tongue learning and bilingualism this implies that learning is most effective when strong foundations in the mother tongue are established to which one or more languages are then added (rather than replacing). Official government policy in early childhood is thus mother tongue education up to (at least) Grade 3, with the learning of at least one additional language as a subject from Grade R.

Language Learning in Early Childhood

For most young South African children, learning English constitutes learning a foreign language. Many African language speakers live in rural areas, where they have little, if any exposure to English as part of their daily home and community activities. Because English, as the language of power, continues to be regarded widely as the “open sesame” language in South Africa, it is commonly understood that most parents want their children to learn English. Often it is assumed that this should necessarily involve their children learning through the medium of English in order to learn it. This assumption has some credibility in South Africa through research studies on the success of the L2 “immersion” (“sink or swim”) models in countries such as Canada. However, these studies are limited, and relate to middle-class situations, where families generally use the child’s mother tongue at home, both orally and for literacy. In most South African home and community settings, the situation is very different: the mother tongue is cherished and in constant use in oral form. However, owing to the low use and status level African languages have as written languages in society, mother tongue literacy is not significantly used or valued at home. Children thus have had few opportunities to explore or develop significant insights and understandings about print in any language before entering school.

Since 1994, this “sink or swim” situation is common for a small but significant number of African language speaking children who live in towns and cities and attend former “white” or “colored” preschool and primary schools. Generally speaking, these children must come to survive in an English medium environment despite the cautionary evidence that early exposure to the L2 should not be done at the expense of the L1 as this can harm cognitive development. One of the consequences of this approach is that by the end of Grade 3, many children neither learn to read and write effectively in their mother tongue, nor in English.

In African language speaking communities, the general trend in terms of language learning in preschool and the Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3) is toward the earliest possible introduction of English, despite the fact that usually those who teach English are often themselves poor speakers (and role models) of the language and few have been trained in modern methods of L2 instruction.

The emphasis is generally on an informal introduction to the language through songs, rhymes, and chanting of common functional phrases. In preschools and schools located in African language speaking communities, throughout the Foundation Phase, English instruction accelerates with an initial emphasis on oral language skills development, but with the gradual introduction of reading and writing. Grade 3 literacy test results in the Western Cape province provide an example of the lack of effectiveness of this approach: children have not learned to read and write in either their mother tongue or English, nor do they know English well enough to use as a medium for successful learning.

Unpublished research conducted for the Pan South African Language Board indicates that the majority of parents would like the home language to be maintained throughout education as long as this does not jeopardize the learning of English. However, the situation still prevails that in Grade 4, the beginning of the Intermediate Phase, a “switch” is made to English as a medium for teaching and learning. At this point, children are expected to be able to read and write using English, all teaching and learning materials are in English, and assessment is carried out in English.

In English and Afrikaans speaking communities, the desirability of introducing children to an African language is increasingly being acknowledged. Informed by the understanding that children learn languages best when very young, many private and some government assisted inner city preschools offer lessons in a predominant African language of the area. Generally, communicative approaches that are playful and focus first on rhymes, songs, and stories are preferred.

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Carole Bloch

Early Intervention and Education for South African Children with Special Education Needs

Although many young children with disabilities are still hidden away from society and/or neglected (also known as backroom children), there are heartwarming stories of young children with disabilities who have been successfully included in mainstream schools and early childhood education (ECD) centers. Early identification and intervention is often the crucial factor that paved the way for successful inclusion.

Educators believe that it is important to identify any impediment to growth or learning as soon as possible. Early intervention should be available to minimize the effects on the learning process and to prevent secondary problems from developing. South Africa is a country in transition; as a result, despite progressive legislation and policy, actual implementation of systems and practices regulating early intervention and education for children with special education needs is not yet adequate.

Policy

Under the pre-1994 dispensation, a small percentage of children with disabilities (from the age of 3) were admitted to preschool sections of special schools where they received early intervention services. However, the specialized education was provided on a racial basis and white children benefited the most from this program. In 1990 the National Education Policy Investigation revealed that of the 2,015 children aged 3–6 in state supported special education classes, 52 percent were white. There were virtually no facilities for African children. The special schools that existed were available by category of disability, leaving children who did not fit the categories or who had multiple disabilities without access. The majority of children with severe disabilities were simply excluded from the education system. Some of these children had access to custodial programs in daycentres. Such resources fell under the auspices of the Department of Health. Children with moderate or mild disabilities were sometimes included in mainstream schools by default, but received little specialized intervention once they actually entered school. Private therapy and early intervention programs were available for those children whose parents could afford them. Parent support groups were an important source of information and informal support. Some groups such as the Disabled Children's Action Group, an organization for parents of children with disabilities, provided access to informal day care and playgroups for children with disabilities.

Under the new dispensation after 1994, the following steps were taken to improve the situation:

- The Constitution (1996) founded our democratic state and common citizenship on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. Everyone has the right to basic education and discrimination against anyone, including people with disabilities, is not allowed.
- This was reinforced by the South African Schools Act (1996) stating that
 - All learners should have access to learning and to equal education opportunities and support where necessary.

- State resources must be provided to ensure this.
- Parents have a right to choose where they want to place their children in school.
- Schools are not allowed to refuse access to children with special needs.
- In 1996 the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services were appointed to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of “special needs and support services” in education and training. These led to the promulgation of Education White Paper 6 in 2001, presenting an eagerly awaited paradigm shift in the thinking on children with special needs. The resulting twenty year plan envisaged new strategies including:
 - A new approach toward organizing support within a single, integrated education system in contrast to the previous separation of “normal” and “disabled or special needs” children.
 - A move away from a learner deficit model that organizes all support on the basis of the category of disability/learning difficulties of the learner without attempting to understand the intensity and the nature of support that the learner really needs.
 - A move beyond the notion of “Special Needs” Education to understanding the various barriers to learning. These barriers go beyond disability and also include, amongst others, negative attitudes toward differences, poverty, language, gender, disease, inappropriate pedagogy, and particular life experiences.
 - Special schools will be transformed and recreated as resource centers, catering to children with severe needs and providing support to children experiencing barriers to learning in ordinary schools.
 - Disabled and other vulnerable children not attending schools will be identified and placed in suitable school settings.
 - There needs to be an acknowledgement of the importance of assessment and intervention during early childhood, even before children enter the school system. Additionally, it is necessary for there to be an understanding of the importance of collaboration between the departments of education, and health and social development. There is a promise of a legally binding National Strategy for Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support to be put in place throughout the education system with the main purpose of facilitating access to schools and to additional support as needed. Partnerships need to be established between community-based health clinics, the parents, and other social services. These relationships will help plan and implement ongoing intervention, and enable teacher support teams to prepare support programs for identified learners on entering school.
 - Support should be redefined, shifting the focus away from supporting individual learners and toward addressing systemic barriers that prevent the system from responding to children’s learning and other needs. An overemphasis on “special needs” has the tendency of labeling and inadvertently marginalizing children.

The Impact of Policy Initiatives

How do these positive policy developments impact young children with special needs in South Africa in 2005? Children with special needs still encounter many of the same barriers, but their journey may be easier because of the strong human rights foundation in the New South Africa. There has been a strong

move away from institutionalization and a stronger focus on empowering parents and their communities to support children with special needs. Although no official procedures are currently in place to identify these children, or to help make them eligible for coordinated state supported early intervention programs, more community-based rehabilitation workers, health visitors, community development workers, etc. are being trained and deployed in rural areas to assist parents of children with special needs. Health Clinic nurses in many areas have been trained to identify children experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, barriers to learning and development. Screening instruments developed by the Health Department are used to screen babies and children visiting the clinics for their routine immunization appointments. Parents are alerted if there is reason for concern and nurses may give advice to parents on activities to enhance the development of the children.

Early Childhood Education for Children with Disabilities

There are more preschool centers that admit children with disabilities. ECD training organizations include modules on special needs/inclusion in their curriculum and it now forms part of the South African Qualifications Authority's accredited qualifications and standards. Barriers to fuller inclusion are a lack of resources, space, and training, as well as negative attitudes. However, ECD teachers often play a pivotal role in the identification of special needs that were previously overlooked. Teachers have an important role to play in the implementation of intervention strategies. Their knowledge of child development, strong appreciation of individual differences, and a commitment to viewing parents as partners in their children's education, equip them to form sound judgments on the child's potential and to have a positive impact on the development of these young children.

Admission to a mainstream school still proves difficult for students with disabilities. Due to the many changes in the education system and the inability of the new support systems to cope with the enormous barriers experienced by "normal" learners, mainstream schools are hesitant to welcome children with disabilities. However, this ineffective response may change within the next few years because of developing initiatives that focus on providing resources to mainstream schools. These initiatives also address the importance of providing intensive teacher training and district-based support teams to support inclusion. Tertiary institutions are offering teachers in-service and preservice courses about inclusion. The University of Pretoria is offering a postgraduate multidisciplinary course in Early Intervention.

Systemic Problems

Unfortunately the system is not working well in all areas, including the following:

- In rural and overcrowded peri-urban areas, social services are limited due to economic and geographical factors.

- Not all health clinic staff are trained to provide special needs screening. The workload at most clinics/hospitals is formidable, with no time available for screening and intervention activities. There is resistance to identifying relatively minor barriers to development because of the lack of follow-up intervention services.
- Health personnel are often not aware of organizations offering early intervention services and give little information or hope to the parents for the child's development.
- Negative attitudes toward disabilities still exist and many parents would rather hide their children than bring them into public. Children with disabilities might miss the initial screening procedure or might get lost in the system even though they have been identified at an early age.
- During the nationwide audit of ECD provisioning in 2000 only 1.36 percent of all children enrolled in ECD services including specialist services were disabled. Nearly two-thirds of these children were between 5 and 7 years of age. These findings suggest that ECD centers were admitting children who should have been in the public schooling system.

The Roles of NGOs, Parents, and the Community

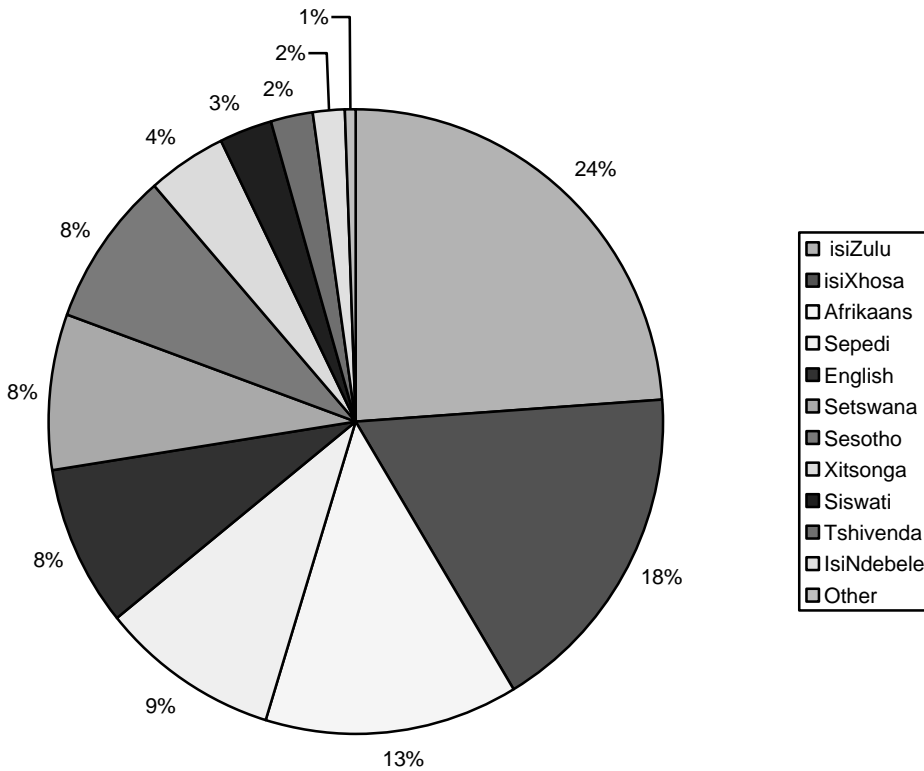
The government's acknowledgement of the importance of nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and the vital role that parents and community members play in the education is a move in the right direction. In South Africa, many NGOs continue to provide advocacy and intervention services for children with "special needs." These include disabled people's organizations such as Disabled Children's Action Group and organizations for specific disabilities, for example, League of Friends of the Blind, Down Syndrome South Africa, DEAFSA, and Epilepsy South Africa. Other NGOs and nonprofit organizations work in the educational field to strengthen and supplement government provision and enhance the implementation of their policies, for example, language, aids, and inclusion policies. Active Learning and Leisure Libraries exemplify how nonprofit organizations providing early intervention services through the establishment of toy libraries at hospitals and in underprivileged areas can make a positive impact in South Africa. The Sunshine Center (Transvaal Memorial Institute) has developed an early intervention training program with manuals widely used by professionals, paraprofessionals, and parents in all sectors of the South African society.

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Laetitia Brümmer

First Home Language Speakers



Financing of Early Childhood Development in South Africa

Prior to the change to a democratic dispensation, the financing of early childhood development (ECD) in South Africa was characterized by a system that was racially discriminatory and inadequate. The finance available for early childhood development was inversely proportional to need, with those in greatest need receiving the least. Children classified as “white” were eligible for some state support, children classified as “colored” received less, and children classified as “African” received minimal state support.

With the advent of a democratic government, the discriminatory nature of early childhood development financing disappeared. However, the inadequacy of financial support to early childhood development centers and programs continues. The issue of who provides the financing and bears the costs of early childhood development is extremely important as the sustainability of the majority of South Africa’s early childhood development centers and programs is dependent on funding. In early childhood development centers and programs the most common sources of financial support are the following:

- Parents, families, and communities;
- Teachers and early childhood development practitioners;

- Government through provincial and local government;
- Private sector (philanthropists, foundations, the National Lottery and business social investment programs);
- Civil society (NGOs, churches, and others); and
- International donor organizations.

Parents, Families, and Communities

Parents, families and communities finance ECD in a number of ways. Most often, this occurs through the payment of fees, however modest, toward the operating costs of a center or program. Fees account for between 75 percent and 85 percent of the operating income of many community-based center and home-based programs. Parents in many cases support programs through the contribution of their labor to build and maintain a facility, through making toys and equipment and through caring for children. Parents may also contribute food that children bring to the program each day.

Although parents and families provide the bulk of the income for programs, it is unrealistic to expect that low-income families and communities will be able to bear all the program costs or sustain programs over time. As a result, many ECD programs in poor communities are of poor quality with poor infrastructure, untrained staff, and a lack of equipment. These often do not meet children's nutritional requirements.

For the more wealthy sections of the population where children are placed in privately owned, early childhood development centers and programs, fees will make up 100 percent of the operating income of such centers.

Teachers and Early Childhood Development Practitioners

Teachers and early childhood development practitioners indirectly finance early childhood development centers and programs through the acceptance of low salaries and, in many cases especially in rural communities, through not receiving payment at all. In instances where parents and families are not able to contribute toward the cost of the education and care of their children, practitioners are unpaid. In other cases, practitioners earn a fraction of a "reasonable salary." In a sector where at least ZAR 3,000 per month would be considered reasonable, 44 percent of practitioners earn less than ZAR 500 per month, these by making a "contribution" that has not been quantified but is clearly substantial.

Government Financing

In South Africa, government funds early childhood development through the provincial departments of Education and of Social Services. Each takes responsibility for a different age grouping. Education is responsible for financing the Grade R program. These are children turning five and Grade R is the first of ten years of basic education. The Social Services departments are responsible for the financing of children aged birth to 4 years.

Government's financial support is based on the premise that the social and education benefits of participation in an early childhood development program contribute significant benefits to society. Government also realizes that because the inability of parents to pay the full costs of ECD services, government has the responsibility to provide additional funding to support young children and their families.

Grade R. funding. Two principal mechanisms exist for funding Grade R in South Africa. Firstly, provincial governments fund grants to community-based ECD centers on a per-learner basis. These grants are expected to provide ECD in areas where other funding opportunities are not available. Provision financed by this mechanism was planned to reach a peak of approximately 135,000 children by 2004, and then grow no further.

Secondly, provision of Grade R in public primary schools is financed via a direct grant-in-aid from provincial departments of education to school governing bodies. These grants flow on a per-learner basis and are only for children in Grade R. The grant-in-aid is poverty targeted. The grants flow directly to the school governing bodies in terms of the South African Schools Act.

The grant-in-aid amount varies between provinces from R 2 per learner per school day to R 6 per learner per school day, based on 200 school days each year for up to 30 learners. Therefore, a class of 30 learners would receive R 12,000 per annum. This money is spent on part of the educator costs, learner support materials, training, furniture, nutrition, and educational equipment. For 2005/06 the nine provincial education departments have allocated R 489 million to Grade R grants-in-aid.

Government is of the view that this combination of poverty-targeted subsidies to children in Grade R in public schools, managed by school governing bodies, and the subsidization of some community-based sites will contribute to creating a vibrant and varied ECD sector. Grade R funding however lags substantially behind funding for other grades in the same school. For example, about R 4,243 is spent on each Grade 1 learner compared to only R 390 on each Grade R learner—11 times less.

In 2005/06 ECD will receive only 0.7 percent of the total education budget. Clearly more funding is needed for improving ECD infrastructure, education programs, training, and personnel. If the current funding allocations are not increased substantially then parents in poor communities will continue to have to bear the costs of early childhood development, resulting in reduced quality in some centers and the closure of others.

The Minister of Education announced in May 2005 that a Norms and Standards policy for Grade R would be introduced in 2006. This would bring early childhood development for children up to 5 years into the formal funding program of government.

Funding for children aged birth to 4 years. Funding for children aged birth to 4 years takes the form of a provincial ECD subsidy. This subsidy varies according to province and ranges from R 2 per child per attendance day to R 6 per child per attendance day. A means test applies that disqualifies families who earn above a

certain level and varies province to province. In total R 234 million was disbursed to 4,612 early childhood development centers (20% of the total number of ECD sites) in 2004/05. How the subsidy is used is not regulated but it is expected that it be used for staff salaries, children's food, educational equipment, and general expenses.

Before an early childhood development center or program can qualify for a subsidy it must be registered with the Social Services department in the province in which it is situated. To qualify for registration a center must meet the following criteria:

- Be legally constituted;
- Be a non-profit organization;
- Be able to show that it owns or leases the premises that it occupies;
- Meet health regulations of the local authority;
- Provide an educational program for the children.

Once a subsidy is approved the center or program has certain financial and program reporting responsibilities.

Local authorities generally do not fund early childhood development programs on a per capita and/or regular basis. In recent years some local authorities have taken to funding programs from their social development budgets. This funding usually supports the training of teachers and practitioners and equipping of early childhood development centers.

Private sector. Under the term "private sector" are included philanthropists, foundations, the National Lottery, and business social investment programs. Although private sector investment in education in South Africa is substantial at R 864 million in 2004, early childhood development only receives about 13 percent of these contributions. Of this most goes to training and service providers and not to community-based early childhood centers and program that work directly with young children.

Civil society. Civil society, including NGOs and churches, supports early childhood development centers and programs financially through contributions in cash and kind. All the main church denominations have social responsibility programs that include early childhood development.

International Donor Organizations

As with the South African private sector, international donor investment in education in South Africa has been substantial although it is decreasing rapidly. A portion of this support is through technical assistance and/or products. Again, early childhood development receives only a small percentage of this funding. Most of the international donor funds go directly to the South African government or to training and service providers. Community-based early childhood centers and programs that care directly for young children receive a miniscule portion of such funds.

Conclusion

South Africa has come a long way in early childhood development policy and practice. The new democratic government has done more for early childhood development than any previous government. However, young children still hover on the margins of the education system. The early childhood sector is under-resourced and it does not appear that this will change significantly in the decade ahead. It appears that the responsibility for financing the sector will continue to be borne by the nonprofit sector, parents, families, and communities.

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Eric Atmore

Early Childhood Development Professional Development in South Africa

One of the most important indicators of quality early childhood development (ECD) programs is the quality of training received by the practitioners working with young children. A National ECD Audit conducted in May/June 2000 showed that the vast majority of ECD practitioners were underqualified (58%) or untrained (23%). The numbers of centers and children in provision were considerably greater than anticipated, but while provision for children has increased, training opportunities for practitioners have decreased considerably.

The opportunities provided through the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), accreditation procedures and some new initiatives for funding training need to be fully explored to generate creative solutions for meeting training needs as cost effectively as possible.

Early Childhood Development Qualifications

After 1994, the South African Qualifications Act was passed. The Act aimed to design a national learning system, and established the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as a statutory body responsible for the development and implementation of the NQF. The Act embodied the government's integrated approach to education and training. The principle of lifelong learning also underlines the progressive education policies of South Africa.

The NQF framework comprises eight levels, grouped in three bands. Level 1 (and below) comprises the General Education and Training band, levels 2 to 4 comprise the Further Education and Training band, and levels 5 to 8 the Higher Education and Training band (tertiary). The levels are defined by level descriptors that allow for equivalencies between different courses. For example, Level 1 on

the NQF comes at the end of ordinary, compulsory schooling up to Grade 9, but can also be reached through ECD training for adults who had limited educational opportunities in the Apartheid era.

ECD standards and qualifications have been registered by SAQA at Level 1 (basic certificate equivalent to Grade 9), Level 4 (national certificate equivalent to a high school leaving certificate or Grade 12) and at Level 5, where there is a post-school higher certificate (one year) and a diploma (two years). Each of these qualifications prepares teachers to work in infant and toddler care (0–3 years) or the preschool phase (2–6 years), with various specializations such as the reception year (Grade R). A 4-year bachelor of education degree is required in order to teach at the foundation phase (Grades R–3, or 5–9 years). This is recognized as a Level 6 qualification.

Some tertiary institutions offer a specialization in preschool education. Post-graduate opportunities include an honors degree and higher diplomas (Level 7), masters and doctoral programs (Level 8), but very few tertiary institutions offer higher degrees in ECD.

Current Situation

In the year 2000, there were around 1.1 million children in some form of care. Provision has continued to expand with the Department of Education's policy to provide a reception year program (Grade R) in primary schools and financial support in some community-based classes. However, the quality of ECD care and education provided remains a major challenge.

Based on the National ECD Audit commissioned by the national Department of Education and conducted in May/June 2000, it was estimated that 53 percent of practitioners had completed schooling (Grade 12) while 16 percent had less than Grade 9. With reference to teaching qualifications, only 23 percent had a degree or diploma, while 54 percent would have been considered underqualified by the education department, mostly practitioners with in-service NGO training; 23 percent had no training at all. Of those with a degree or diploma, only 12 percent had professional ECD qualifications (at least 3 years tertiary study). In terms of training opportunities, it has been estimated that less than 10 percent is provided by formal tertiary institutions and the bulk (80%) of training is provided by the NGO in-service training providers.

Challenges in Early Childhood Development Training Provision

There are major training needs among ECD practitioners already working with young children in different forms of provision. Of particular concern are those who had no training in 2000 and the largest group who have had in-service training and need to get recognized qualifications—now possible for the first time through the establishment of the NQF. Furthermore, the statistics on training needs do not include the need to train new ECD practitioners to replace those leaving the system, to improve adult-child ratios, and the needs of growth in provision.

The challenges in meeting these needs are enormous in view of the existing training places available. There are a number of issues that complicate the provision of high-quality training services. These can be grouped into issues related to the delivery of quality training and issues related to providing training.

Challenges in training delivery (quality issues). There are various challenges to the provision of quality training.

Training of trainers. Perhaps the most urgent need to ensure quality training is upgrading the qualifications of the trainers, assessors, and moderators. Many experienced ECD trainers working in NGOs providing training have received only in-service training. Their knowledge and skills need to be verified through the recognition of prior learning and top-up training provided where necessary so that they can be assessed for valid current qualifications. This also applies to trainers working in the formal sector, especially in Further Education and Training institutions (which offer Grades 10–12).

For training providers to be accredited, the quality assurance body requires that trainers are qualified at a level higher in the field of practice (i.e., ECD) than that they are training. They also need to have adult education skills that are incorporated in the level 5 ECD qualifications. At this stage, however, there are very few ECD training providers that have the capacity to provide this training.

Career paths and leadership capacity. Opportunities for career advancement in the ECD sector in South Africa are extremely limited. This is because of the lack of funding available and limited promotion posts, either in higher education or in government departments. There is a major need to develop leadership capacity, especially in course design, materials and curriculum development, and research. More ECD practitioners with higher education qualifications (at Levels 7 and 8) are essential to create a more vibrant academic/ research-orientated climate.

Key issues in course design. The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a key principle in the new outcomes-based education and training system, and it is a requirement for accreditation of training providers. In the ECD sector RPL is essential for the thousands of practitioners who have received NGO training over the last twenty years or more. RPL, however, is a new concept and training providers, in general, are struggling with it.

All ECD qualifications are made up of three components: fundamental learning (communication and mathematical literacy) required to improve the capacity for learning, core learning (compulsory subjects), and elective learning for specialization. There are three core areas: healthy development, provision for active learning (including activities and teaching methods), and a management component. Electives include specializations on curriculum areas such as literacy, numeracy, art, music, inclusion for children with barriers to learning, antibias curriculum, HIV and AIDS, and managing an ECD facility.

Most of the NGO training providers have focused on the core areas at Levels 1 and 4. Providing fundamentals training, as well as a range of electives in specialization areas, is a challenge for most NGOs, primarily because the training institutions are too small to offer specialist tuition.

Training delivery. State training providers are often in a better position to offer fundamental learning, while the NGO providers are very experienced and skilled

in providing the in-service training that is most needed in the field now. One means of meeting this challenge would involve organizing consortiums among NGO providers. This would allow for a chance to “share the load” and also give students access to a wider variety of electives. Partnerships between state and nongovernment training providers should also be established.

Challenges in training provision. There are approximately 60–70 NGO training providers offering a variety of training to practitioners. Sixty-eight percent of the practitioners are African women, the majority of whom have received training from the NGO sector and are regarded as unqualified by the national Education Department. Half of the practitioners earn less than a living wage. Most training providers charge training fees but the NGOs rely heavily on donors and fundraising efforts to subsidize the training they offer.

Costs of training. Practitioners tend to choose training providers based on proximity and according to the training fees charged. Given the changes in terms of providing accredited training, NGOs face further costs related to training staff as well as reviewing training and assessment manuals and practice to meet the standards required by the quality assurer.

Funding. Government funding for ECD remains very limited (less than 1% of the education budget is spent on ECD). The Education Department subsidizes tertiary training institutions at a high level, but only for students who will work in the formal school system (from Grade 1 upward) following their training. There is also some subsidization for secondary colleges that provide full-time training for ECD practitioners on a small but increasing scale. As indicated above, most of the ECD training is provided in the shrinking NGO sector.

Due to the downscaling of foreign funding and the reality that available funding often goes directly to the government, a number of NGO providers have closed in the past five years. Others have downsized, often losing skilled staff to better paid jobs in other sectors. Many donors have specific funding policies that exclude training because this is seen as a government responsibility. A fee-based training service is not viable due to poverty and low wages in the ECD sector.

Government departments occasionally subsidize NGO training through special projects on a tender basis. A national skills levy also provides limited funds for ECD training, but the subsidies (per trainee) do not cover a substantial part of the costs.

Conclusion

Clearly the South African government needs to prioritize ECD, and budget for this area accordingly. Inter-sectoral collaboration will need clear objectives and dedicated staffing to be effective. Current government planning has a strong focus on improving ECD quality. As civil society, both NGOs and other ECD stakeholders will need to develop a strategy, part of which should be to engage the government on the promises it made to the children of South Africa.

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Sweden

Early Childhood Education in Sweden

Introduction

Sweden spreads over a relatively large area, 450,000 square kilometers, making it comparable in size to California or Spain. Of the 9 million people in the population, 85 percent live in the southern part of the country, many in the three large metropolitan areas of Stockholm—the capital on the east coast, Göteborg on the west coast, and Malmö in the south. The northern part is a sparsely populated area with mountains, forests, and rivers, but the mining, lumbering, and water power available in this area have long represented important cornerstones of the Swedish economy, producing much of the raw materials and energy for the processing industries further south.

Increasingly the population is becoming more heterogeneous. Today people from more than 170 countries live in Sweden, and an estimated 18 percent of the population in Sweden today are first or second generation immigrants. These families came in the 1960s or 1970s, mostly from southern Europe or Finland to find factory jobs in the Swedish industry, or in the 1980s or 1990s mostly as refugees from conflict areas in Africa, Eastern Europe, or the Middle East.

Family Size and Structure

Several recent social developments have shaped modern childhood in Sweden. Most families (85%) have only one or two children, so growing up in a small family is common. Cohabitation is today a normal social phenomenon, and while most Swedish children experience growing up with both a mother and a father, one in every five families with children is a single-parent household. Most women continue working when they have children; 78 percent of mothers with children aged 0–6 years are active in the labor market. In Sweden, gender equality is based on the principle that each individual should be able to achieve economic independence through gainful employment.

Swedish Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

The systematic expansion of the Swedish child-care system dates back to the early seventies. In particular, the following six goals hallmark Swedish preschool services: (1) stimulating and developmental activities for children, which combine education and care, (2) close cooperation between parents and service providers, (3) service provision for all children, with an emphasis on children in need of special support, (4) service provision designed to permit parents to combine parenthood and work, (5) public funding complemented by reasonable parental fees, and (6) municipal responsibility for full coverage.

Between the years 1970 and 2000 the number of children in full-time care increased tenfold. In 2002, 81 percent of all children aged 1-5 attended preschool activities, that is, 370,000 children had a place in preschools or family day-care homes. Of all school-aged 6-9-year-old children, 73 percent had a place in a leisure-time center before and after school hours. The vast majority of these ECEC settings are run by the local municipalities, but nonmunicipal, although publicly financed, settings have been more common during the past ten years.

Types of Settings

Swedish children start compulsory schooling at the age of seven. However, 98 percent of all six-year-olds attend the voluntary preschool class, which is typically a half-day service. Children in the 1-5 age group are found in the *preschools* (until recently named "day-care centers") or in the *family day-care homes*. Infants younger than one year of age are cared for in the homes by their mothers or fathers, who use their right to stay home with pay to take care of their babies from birth to thirteen months, hereby removing the pressure on municipalities to provide public ECEC outside the homes for these children. School-age child care is provided for 6-12-year-old children in *leisure-time centers* or family day-care homes.

Preschools offer full time care and education for 1-5-year-olds whose parents work or study, or if the child is judged to be in need of special support. Most preschools are located in the neighborhoods where the children live. They are open weekdays throughout the year, with hours adjusted to meet the needs of working parents. As of 1998, preschools have their own state-established national curriculum. In 2002, 72 percent of all children aged 1-5 were enrolled in preschools ("day-care centers").

In *family day-care homes*, the municipal family day-care mother takes care of children in her own home. The curriculum of the preschool does not apply to family day-care homes, but should serve as a guide. In 2002, 8 percent of all 1-5-year-olds were enrolled in family day care homes. The number of children attending family day care homes in this age group decreased from a peak of 156,000 children in 1990 to 37,000 children in 2002.

Leisure-time centers for the 6-9-year-olds is the type of child care that has increased the most during the past ten years. Children enrolled spend those parts of the day when they are not in preschool class or primary school in the

leisure-time center, which is often located in the primary school building. They might also attend during school holidays.

Since 1998 the municipalities have been obliged to provide all six-year-olds with a place in the *preschool class* for at least 525 hours. The preschool class is a voluntary school form for children and free of charge. Education in the preschool class is aimed at stimulating each child's development and learning and to provide a basis for further schooling. The nationally applied curriculum for compulsory schools (Lpo 94) has been adjusted to include the preschool class. The main reason for introducing the preschool class as a voluntary part of the school system has been to facilitate integration between preschool and compulsory school. In principle all six-year-olds attend the preschool class.

In addition, *open preschools* offer part-time activities for children who are not enrolled in other services. Open preschools require children to be accompanied by their parents. In this way they provide an opportunity for parents and caregivers to get together on an informal basis, with the result that some of the open preschools are functioning as *family resource centers*. In the period 1990–2002, the number of open preschools has decreased from 1,600 to 708, a drop largely explained by the fact that most children today are enrolled in other preschool activities.

Privately run, publicly funded ECEC became more common during the 1990s. In 2002, 17 percent of the children enrolled in preschools attended a private preschool. Forty percent of these children attended a parent cooperative and 30 percent attended a company-run preschool.

The distribution of various types of services differs between different types of municipalities. Family day-care homes are considerably more common in rural areas and other smaller municipalities than in big city regions, while the opposite applies for preschools and leisure-time centers.

“Full Coverage”

In relation to existing legislation, *full coverage* was basically achieved at the end of the 1990s, to the extent that places in ECEC settings were made available to those parents who worked or studied, or to children in need of special support, in 276 of Sweden's 289 municipalities. Some children were still excluded from services, however, and during the past five years new reforms have entitled parents staying home on parental leave to retain the place for their older children in preschools. In addition, children of unemployed parents now have the right to preschool activities at least three hours per day or fifteen hours per week. In January 2003, universal preschool was introduced for all four- and five-year-olds. All children are now offered at least 525 hours per year in preschool activities, starting in the fall of the year they turn four.

Staffing

The personnel in the Swedish ECEC settings are well educated. Very few of the personnel lack education for working with children. There are four types of personnel working in the preschools, family day care homes, and leisure-time centers.

The educational background and training of these four groups of staff members vary, as do the settings they work in and their professional responsibilities:

Preschool teachers complete a three-year university-level educational program that combines fieldwork and theoretical work. Courses focus on child development, family sociology, and teaching methods. Courses in research methods and evaluation skills are also part of this program. Studies are free of charge to the students.

Child minders receive their education in Swedish secondary schools. Three years in length, this program provides students with basic skills in child minding and developmental psychology.

Family day care providers are not required by the state to obtain any training, although it is recommended that they complete the child minder training course. Many municipalities, however, have instituted special training of about hundred hours, as an introduction to the family day care occupation.

The education and training of the *leisure-time pedagogues*, working with children in school-age child care, are rather similar to that of the preschool teachers—often the two groups of students take courses together at universities and university colleges. In 2002, the number of employees (full-time equivalents) amounted to 63,000 in preschools and 19,000 in leisure-time centers. Only about 5 percent of these employees have no training for working with children, whereas more than 50 percent have completed higher education university programs.

Salary differences between different categories of personnel working in ECEC settings are comparatively small. Whereas a child minder and a family day care mother might earn an average of SEK 15,000 per month (EUR 1,550), the salary of a preschool teacher or a leisure-time pedagogue after a few years employment might be about SEK 18,000 per month. (Teachers in the compulsory school system—grades 1–9 might be earning an additional SEK 2,000 per month).

Gender distribution among employees is very uneven. Only 6 percent in preschools and leisure-time centers are men, the same proportion as throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The highest proportion of men is found at leisure-time centers (16%) and among supervisors (20%).

A New Integrated Teacher Education Program

Through the transfer of responsibilities for preschools from Ministry of Health and Welfare to Ministry of Education and Science that took place in 1996, preschool became the first link in a broad and integrated education system covering the ages 1–19, from preschool to the end of upper secondary school. In 1998, the first preschool curriculum for children aged 1 to 5 years was issued.

These changes have also recently been followed by radical changes in the teacher education programs at Swedish universities and university colleges. In the new integrated teacher education programs, students planning to work in preschools, primary schools or secondary schools work together during several of the study terms. Students specializing in the early years will in the future be qualified to teach in preschools (ages 1 to 5), preschool classes (6-year-olds), the first years of the compulsory school (ages 7 to 11) as well as in school-age child care.

Funding and Financing

The total gross costs for the Swedish ECEC system amounted in 2002 to SEK 44,000 millions (EUR 4,500 millions). Preschool accounts for 68 percent of the expenditure, leisure-time centers for 23 percent, and family day-care homes for 8 percent. Staff costs make up about 75 percent of the costs, and costs for premises about 15 percent. Per child average costs amount to SEK 60,000, with average costs for children in preschools almost three times higher than costs for children in leisure-time centers. To cover the costs of ECEC the municipalities might combine the general government block grants with income tax revenues and parental fees in various ways. In 1999 a flat rate set fee was introduced by the government. Parent fees for one child are now maximized at SEK 1,260 per month, and municipalities are compensated for loss of income. This reform substantially lowered the fees for 80 percent of the families and eased difficulties caused by income-related and time-related fees.

The National Curriculum for Preschool

As mentioned above, the first national curriculum for preschool (Lpfö 98) came into effect in 1998, making the preschool a first step in the Swedish educational system. Overall, the educational system is now comprised of three curricula, one for the preschool, a second for the compulsory school (grades 1-9) also covering the preschool class for 6-year-olds, and a third for the upper secondary school (grades 10-12). The three curricula are linked by a shared view on knowledge, development and learning, and cover the first 20 years of the life-long learning philosophy of the Swedish society.

Philosophically, the preschool curriculum builds on the idea of the child as a competent learner, active thinker, and involved doer. Swedish theories about child learning can be briefly summarized by the following values:

- *Continuous learning and development.* Children learn continually in all places over time. Children use all their senses, so specific times for “learning” cannot be specified.
- *Play and theme oriented ways of working.* Play is the basis of preschool activity in that it fosters thinking, imagination, creativity, language, and cooperation. Theme-oriented learning fosters children’s opportunities to understand contexts and relationships, and heightens their ability to develop their own learning theories.
- *Linking to the child’s own experiences.* Children must be able to relate what they are learning to what they already know.
- *The pedagogical importance of care.* Care provides the experience and knowledge young children need to get to know themselves and the surrounding world.
- *Development in groups.* Children need other children from whom to learn; other children cannot be replaced by adults or toys.

The national curriculum for the preschool is based on a division of responsibilities, where the State determines the overall goals and guidelines for ECEC, and the 289 municipalities are responsible for implementation of these goals. Goals and guidelines for preschools are provided in the following areas: (a) norms and values, (b) development and learning, (c) influence of the child, (d) preschool

and home, and (e) cooperation between preschools and the preschool class, the school, and the leisure-time centers. The goals in the preschool curriculum are defined as goals to be aimed at rather than explicitly achieved in terms of the individual development and learning of the child. Individual child outcomes will not be formally assessed in terms of grades and evaluations, since children might attend preschool at different ages over varying periods of time. The curriculum transfers over entirely to the professionals the responsibility for choosing and developing methods to achieve the goals.

Quality Controls

The School Act of 1998 stipulates that the municipalities are obliged to provide preschool activities of high quality. In ECEC settings, there should be personnel present with the appropriate educational background or experience to satisfy children's need for care and education. The size and composition of the groups of children should be appropriate and the settings should be suitable for their purposes. Activities should be based on the individual needs of each child.

According to the Ordinance on Quality Reports in the Education System, each municipality and school is to prepare written quality reports each year as part of the continuous follow-up and evaluation of the educational system.

Since 2003, the National Agency for Education is divided into two authorities: The National Agency for Education and The National Agency for School Improvement. The National Agency for Education is, through its Educational Inspectorate, responsible for educational inspection, national follow-up and evaluation, and reviewing curricula. The task of the educational inspectorate is to determine whether and how well an activity is functioning in relation to the regulations set out in the Education Act, school ordinances, and national curriculum. This involves auditing and assessment at the municipal and individual school level, focusing on both the quality and legal aspects of the activities under inspection. Educational inspection, a prioritized activity of the National Agency for Education, also provides an underlying basis for quality development in preschool activities, child care for school children, and the school system as a whole.

Current Issues of Concern

It is quite clear that the very rapid expansion of the child-care system, combined with severe cutbacks in municipal budgets during the 1990s, has led to larger groups of children and to lower adult/child ratios in preschools, family day care homes, and leisure-time centers. Even though the number of children increased by 185,000 between the years 1991 and 1997, total municipal costs for child care remained the same. On the one hand, these data may be considered as an increase in productivity, if productivity is measured in costs per hour. On the other hand, these changes do not necessarily bode well for children whose development and learning are nurtured by close interactions with playmates and adults, a condition that is reduced when the number of children per group increases, while the number of adults decreases. In 2002, the National Agency for Education carried

out an intensive study of group sizes in preschools, preschool classes, and leisure-time centers. The results show no change in the size of preschool groups during the past year—the situation seems to be stabilizing, but at a historically high level. The average group size for younger children (1–3-years-old) is now 14.6 children, and for groups with older children (3–5-years-old) 19.7. The average adult/child ratio was 5.3 children per annual employee. These figures, and their consequences for the daily activities in Swedish preschools, are causing major concern among parents, personnel, and researchers, and (hopefully) among administrators and politicians involved in ECEC decision-making.

In 2002, 44,600 children aged between 1–5 years enrolled in preschool or family day care homes had a different first language than Swedish. Of these, only 5,800 received first language support, which might be compared with the situation in 1990 when 57 percent of children with another first language than Swedish received additional attention in their first language. The goal of the preschool for children who have their roots in a culture other than Swedish is to provide the foundation for active bilingualism and a dual cultural identity. Special government funds have been set aside for municipalities to improve the conditions of children and families in “neighborhoods in need of special support,” that is, segregated urban areas with large proportions of immigrants. Some of these funds have been used to hire mother tongue teachers in the preschools, but support for language development in early years needs to be considerably strengthened, a point also stressed in the General Advice and Comments on Quality in Preschool published in 2005 by the National Agency for Education.

A somewhat different concern emanating from the launching of the new, integrated teacher education programs at universities in Sweden is linked to the fact that many of the students now specializing in Early Childhood Studies seem to have their focus on working with children in the 6–12-year age group, rather than the 1–5 year group. The new education gives students, following graduation, a chance to choose either of these groups and to work as teacher in preschools, preschool classes, or grades 1–5 in primary schools. Recruiting enough qualified teachers for the preschools might be difficult during the next decade, according to concerned school leaders all over the country.

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Lars Gunnarsson

Cultural Access and Respect for Differences

The Swedish preschool has from the very beginning been inclusive and has accepted children regardless of gender, class, language, and ability. Although small-scale state subsidies were allocated as early as in 1945, the preschools were still few in number, however, and not many children attended them. During the 1970s when preschool expanded and the first official state guidelines were issued, democracy and equality were stressed even more. When the first national curriculum was passed in 1998, it only confirmed what tradition, previous documents from the Government, and the curriculum of the teacher training had established as the fundamental values of inclusion and equality.

The National curriculum states that

Democracy forms the foundation of the pre-school. For this reason all preschool activity should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values. Each and everyone working in the pre-school should promote respect for the intrinsic value of each person as well as respect for our shared environment. An important task of the pre-school is to establish and help children acquire the values on which our society is based. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between the genders as well as solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school shall actively promote in its work with children.

Thus, the Swedish preschool promotes diversity and acts against any form of exclusion or discrimination, in the official documents as well as in its practice.

Immigrant Children

Immigration to Sweden constituted no real problem regarding the integration of children before the Second World War, at least according to the official discourse. The Finnish children arriving during the war without their parents were quickly dispersed throughout the country and went to the same preschools or playgroups as the children of their new foster families. Not until the post-war years did Italian and Yugoslavian industrial workers to any observable extent bring their families to settle in Sweden. These children were accepted in the preschools of their new neighborhoods and the language was Swedish from the beginning. Children were supposed to assimilate Swedish values, the Swedish language, and the traditions. Their first language was seldom acknowledged as an asset but more as an obstacle to be quickly overcome.

For the immigrant families, preschool was often seen as the first contact with Swedish society and Swedish culture. In the guidelines issued by the National Board of Health in the 1970s the immigrant children were mentioned as a possible concern. The preschool constituted a moral dilemma for the individual child, who had to choose between different systems of norms and values. However, the general view was also that the Swedish children accepting an immigrant child in their playgroup had something to gain from the encounter.

As immigration increased in the late twentieth century, and as the whole preschool sector expanded, the focus concerning the children with “foreign background” was more on the language issue than on differing norms and values. Even though Swedish was to be the new common language for these children, there was a risk that the children’s mother tongue was neglected. Many bilingual preschools, Turkish/Swedish, Serbo-Croatian/Swedish, staffed with bilingual teachers addressed this issue of double language proficiency. There was an imminent danger of children losing their language of emotion, their mother tongue, as well as a risk of not being able to communicate with the relatives of their first nation, the country of their parents and grandparents. Growing up as a bilingual child was synonymous with being a child at risk.

In the last decade of the twentieth century many refugee families arrived in Sweden and the children were included in the Swedish preschools as part of the integration policy. The language issue transformed from bilingualism into multilingualism. In preschools with children of 15–20 nationalities and languages, and with children with Swedish as their first language as a minority, Swedish became the *lingua franca* common to all children and staff. Many children also speak at least two native languages, for instance one maternal and paternal, along with Swedish with their friends and teachers at preschool. As the situation is now in the early twenty-first century, multilingualism is seen as an asset rather than as a problem. Children who grow up in a multi-linguistic environment acquire a meta-linguistic competence necessary in a global world.

The national curriculum also stresses the future world that children will inhabit. In the words of the curriculum

The internationalisation of Swedish society imposes high demands on the ability of people to live with and understand values in cultural diversity. The pre-school is a social and cultural meeting place, which can reinforce this and prepare children for life in an increasingly internationalised community. Awareness of their own cultural heritage and participating in the culture of others should contribute to children’s ability to understand and empathise with the circumstances and values of others. The pre-school can help to ensure that children from national minorities and children with a foreign background receive support in developing dual cultural affiliation.

When Sweden became a member of the European Union, new light was directed toward the national minorities and their right to their first language, their culture, and traditions. In Sweden, these languages are Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli, Romani-chib, and Yiddish. In this policy, the first language identity is more accepted than it has ever been before.

The language issue has also to a large extent been overshadowed lately by the issue of cultural identity, in the fundamental values of democracy and equality. Again as stated in the national curriculum

Increasing mobility across national borders creates cultural diversity in the pre-school, which provides children with the opportunity to build up respect and consideration for each individual irrespective of background. All parents should be able to send their children to the pre-school, fully confident that their children will not be prejudiced in favour of any particular view. All who work in the pre-school should uphold

the fundamental values that are set out in this curriculum and should very clearly dissociate themselves from anything that conflicts with these values.

Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs have the same right to preschool education as any other child. The national curriculum states that

Pedagogical activities should be related to the needs of all children in the pre-school. Children who occasionally or on a more permanent basis need more support than others should receive this in relation to their needs and circumstances. The skill of the staff in understanding and interacting with the child, as well as gaining the confidence of parents is important, if the period in the pre-school is to provide support for children facing difficulties.

However, since the 1990s, the local councils are responsible for providing the necessary resources for preschool, with an attendance of more than 80 percent of children in the age group 1-5, as well as language support in first language proficiency, and support for children facing difficulties due to physical and psycho-developmental impairment. In a recession, when economic resources have become scarce, this means that the process of providing support has become more cumbersome to staff and parents, as well as to the officials.

In a government bill on the quality in the Swedish preschool this setting is characterized as the most important arena of integration. Nearly 14 percent of children in preschool speak a foreign first language. The proposal implies that the local authorities responsible for preschool allocate more resources to support these children. The current problem, though, is that resources allocated from the local councils are far from adequate for meeting the requirements of the national curriculum and the official policies. This conflict between national aims and local resources mostly affects children who need support in language development and in their daily lives. The decrease in resource allocation has led to an increased child/teacher ratio and to larger groups, although the variation in group size is high. Group sizes are higher in the urban areas where attendance is higher among immigrant and special needs children. There is also a general view among teachers and other staff that the number of these children has increased lately. Again, the children who need more support are less likely to get it.

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Maj Asplund Carlsson and Johannes Lunneblad

Parental Involvement in Child Care in Sweden

Relations between parents and child care in Sweden may mean just a feeling that everything is all right and that their child is in good hands. Many parents find this quite satisfactory. On the other hand, there are parents who want to be part of the activities, to run the center, and to have full control and influence. And somewhere in between you find most parents.

Background

In public child care in Sweden, the importance of good relations with the parents is stressed. Child care is supposed to be a complement to the family and therefore a close cooperation between parents and staff is required. Parent cooperation is a constant theme in discussions about child care, but effects in practice are more difficult to document.

Official documents concerning school, preschool, and school-age child care state that parents have a right to be informed about, have influence upon, and take part in the activities that their children are attending. The official documents also state the staffs' obligation to make this possible in different ways.

Additionally, documents related to parental involvement and the importance of cooperation between staff and parents can be found at the local or school levels.

Parents are Different

Parents are different from one to another. The causes for these differences may be social, economic, and cultural. Consequently, parents' views show a wide range of variation. Different parents have different views of cooperation between home and child care or school, about the distribution of work at home, and about the territory of the parents and the territory of the staff. Parents also differ when it comes to the concept of knowledge—what is knowledge, what is important to know and to master? There are also different views on which roads to take to help children reach and master this knowledge.

Parents may also have different views of child development, how to raise a child and meet that child's needs, interests and behavior. The differences between the views of the personnel and the parents can be small or nonexistent, or there can be a gap that is difficult to manage. This gap can be troublesome for all parties concerned.

Contacts between Parents and Staff Members

In Sweden there are different kinds of contacts for parents to use. The first contact is when a child has secured a place in child care. Usually parent/s and child

visit the preschool to become acquainted with the premises, children, and staff. When the child begins child care, a specially designed adjustment period, usually two weeks in length, is scheduled. During this period, parents spend time with their child in the preschool setting. Parents might also visit the preschool setting after the adjustment period is over in order to develop a deeper understanding for the preschool and its activities.

Group meetings for parents are scheduled 2–3 evenings every year. The goal of these meetings is to exchange information and to give parents a chance to get to know other parents and the personnel. There is also a special kind of meeting known as the drop-in-coffee. Typically offered one afternoon a month, parents are invited to the preschool to have a cup of coffee or tea and to meet the children, staff, and other parents. There is no program or timetable and parents can stay for as long as they would like when they pick up their child, or they can choose not to stay.

Other informal get togethers are picnics, field-trips, or “work days” where parents, children, and staff do things together; for example, paint a room or replant the garden. Participating in excursions, picking mushrooms, going fishing, or barbecuing are examples of other joint activities.

More structured meetings include the individual developmental conversations that are usually arranged twice a year. During these meetings, which typically take about 30 minutes, parents and staff members have a chance to discuss matters inside or outside the preschool in more detail. They also talk about the child’s development and learning.

Sometimes parents are elected to be members of the preschool board, which includes the director and representatives for the staff. Together they manage the preschool and make decisions. In parent cooperative centers, parental participation is often a prerequisite for enrollment. Parents are the employers, and have direct influence over activities. Parents often spend one or two weeks per year in the centers, actively involved in the daily activities.

Parental Perspectives on Involvement with Early Childhood Education Institutions

In a recent study we asked more than 200 parents of children in various early childhood education (ECE) settings about their views on the relations between the family and the child-care settings. Questions about relationships between jobs and child care, parental expectations, and cooperation and influence were included. Parents are also asked about other aspects of their lives, such as the family economy, household work, leisure time activities, and informal social supports. Key questions included the following:

- How do the parents’ interactions with child care and school relate to the picture of their total life situation (family, work, housework, leisure time activities, and so on)?
- What are parents’ conceptions of and attitudes toward child care? What information do they want and in which ways would they like to receive it?
- How actively involved do parents want to be? Which expectations do parents have concerning cooperation? What influence do they want to exert?

The Meaning of Child Care in Parents' Lives

We asked the parents what it meant to them to have their child in child care. The answers show the relation between the parents' efforts to cope with their whole life situation and their views of preschool. A large group of parents answered "It means everything." By this they meant that child care allowed them to have a job, earn a living, and use their education. Another thing that many parents stressed was that they could go to work without a bad conscience because they knew that their children were in good hands.

The Importance of Being Greeted in the Hall

Fathers and mothers stated that they have all had "experiences in the entrance hall." The entrance hall is often the place where parents and staff discuss the child's day, and it provides an opportunity to build a relationship between both parties. Mothers as well as fathers have opinions about how the staff meets parents at the time of arrival. One of the most crucial elements in the parents' total view of a particular preschool is based on whether a member of the staff comes out into the entrance hall to meet the parent and the child. If a parent wants to be met but seldom is, then that parent's disappointment tends to impact and affect his or her attitude toward the whole preschool environment.

Information about Goals

Few of the parents in our study were familiar with the social and educational goals of their particular day care center or school. Many parents stated that they had probably read about these goals or even heard about them, but could not remember the content of such goals.

To judge from the parents' answers, it is uncommon that teachers in Early Childhood Education settings explain to parents *why* they do what they do. Parents are often informed about *what* the children do, their routines and activities, or the schedule of the school, but seldom why. Sometimes parents ask questions about this, and are responded to in different ways by the staff members. Some staff see this as a serious question and explain the pedagogical or psychological reasons behind activities and routines. Others, however, might feel threatened by the question and might consider the parent to be troublesome.

To exert real influence, parents have to know about child care and school. It is not enough to have used the right to visit the child a few days a year. Not all parents are interested in obtaining this knowledge or have the time and energy to do so.

Parental Interests in Influencing Activities in Early Childhood Education Settings

An interesting, controversial, and complicated question concerns influence and how it is linked to parental involvement. Over the years, there have been many attempts to increase parental influence. For the most part, this has been done by

practical measures such as increased number of meetings, parents participating in daily activities, questionnaires to parents about preferred activities, and so on.

In exceptional cases, a particular group of parents might become extremely active in trying to have influence and to effect what is going on. The cause of this activity is often a decision by local authorities to cut or even close down some provision. It may also be some negative change in the number of children or staff. When such incidents occur, most parents become deeply engaged, spending much time in meetings, searching for and presenting support for protests. In our study we tried to understand what kind of influence the parents really *wanted* to have on their child's particular preschool. The results from a questionnaire answered by parents in several different preschools, shown in the table below, can serve as an illustrative example.

	<i>Want to participate</i>	<i>Actually do participate</i>
Planning ECE activities	6%	1%
Putting forward views	44%	20%
Discussing ECE activities	34%	16%
No need for influence	16%	

As the table shows, when we compared what the parents wanted or wished for with what they perceived was the case in the present situation, we found that there was a clear gap between their wishes and their actual experiences. In addition, 27 percent of parents indicated that "I don't know how my points of view are treated by the staff," and more than one-third (36%) responded that they had no influence at all over what happened in the center.

Few parents wanted to have influence regarding activity planning. Some parents stated that they lacked sufficient knowledge to manage activities, the pedagogical framework, or the written documents. Several parents said something like "Goodness gracious! That is the job of the staff. They are trained for that. I would not like the staff to come to my job to tell me how to run that."

It as appears that as long as everything works well and the child gets on well and wants to go to preschool in the mornings and the parent doesn't see or feel discord, many of the parents don't want to or have time for extensive contact with the preschools. Instead, parents are free to use their time and energy to master their own jobs. An effect of this might be a lower level of perceived stress, which in turn might make parents feel more comfortable at home with their children.

A somewhat different form of influence that parents prefer is *cooperation*. The parents in our study wanted to have opportunities to discuss what they perceived to be the needs of their particular child, and they expected that the personnel try to provide for these needs as much as possible. In return, in order to make the whole group of children function together, the parents could accept the staff's demands and expectations.

Our analyses revealed that the concept of cooperation seems to be less problematic or threatening to parents than the concept of influence. Considerably more parents wanted to cooperate with the staff than wished to exert influence.

This last finding highlights the importance of knowing and paying attention to the fact that the use of particular words and concepts might affect parents' views and perspectives in different and unintended ways.

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Lisbeth Flising

Gender Equity and Early Childhood Education in Sweden

Introduction

For some decades gender equity issues have in different ways been salient features in the arguments for and development of preschool services and early childhood education in Sweden. When the strong expansion of child-care services started in the 1970s, one major argument was that public child-care services are needed in order to give mothers and fathers equal opportunity to combine parenthood with employed work or studies. This goal for preschool is also mentioned in the 1997 government bill concerning a national curriculum for preschool.

The national curriculum for preschool specifies the values, norms, and educational goals for early childhood education. One highlight is on gender issues.

The ways in which adults respond to boys and girls, as well as the demands and requirements imposed on children contribute to their appreciation of gender differences. The preschool should work to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles. Girls and boys in the preschool should have the same opportunities to develop and explore their abilities and interest without having limitations imposed by stereotyped gender roles.

Early childhood education (ECE) settings have two different essential purposes to serve for gender equity, one concerning the parents and adult society and the other concerning the children and their conditions and development.

Early Childhood Education and Gender Equity among Adults

The parents. In combination with other public gender-reconciling measures (e.g., parental leave periods for mothers and fathers to share) the rapid expansion of public preschool services over the past two decades may be the primary reason why Swedish mothers show one of the highest levels of labor force participation in the world, and Swedish fathers take more time off to be with their children than did their own fathers or fathers in most other countries. Early childhood education in the form of full day preschool service has undoubtedly contributed to more equal opportunities and greater gender equity for Swedish men and women.

The staff. When given greater opportunities to join the workforce many women have gone to work in the sectors of health, care, and education. The expansion of child-care services opened up a large new area of work, but a strong majority of those who went into this field were women. Nearly 98 percent of the staff in preschool services is women. This is not a new situation. Historically, the care and rearing of young children have been considered to be the responsibility of mothers, in Sweden as in most other countries. From the beginning of the history of early childhood education it has with few exceptions been women who have worked in this field and have created the scope of ideas and developed the activities and working methods.

Different measures have been taken, on national and local levels, to try to increase the proportion of men working within early childhood education and care. These measures have not been very successful thus far, but the work continues. The recently appointed national Delegation for Gender Equality in Pre-school is one such measure.

Approximately 1,700 men are employed in preschool institutions in Sweden. In the settings where these men work children might experience men and women working together on an equal basis. But in groups where all staff members are women, fewer resources and opportunities exist for meeting the stated goal of the curriculum “to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles.”

Thus although in Swedish families nowadays fathers are increasingly engaged in the care of their children and in sharing more of household tasks and other family obligations with the mothers, in most preschool settings the care, upbringing, and education of young children are still almost entirely the responsibility of women.

Early Childhood Education and Gender Equity for Children

Most groups of children in preschool settings have a fairly even distribution of boys and girls. The national curriculum states that they “should have the same opportunities to develop and explore their abilities and interest without having limitations imposed by stereotyped gender roles.”

When talking about gender issues, preschool staff often argue that they do not think about the children in terms of girls and boys, but see and meet every child in an individual way according to the needs and interests of that child. Hence they claim to be gender neutral in their interactions with boys and girls. But researchers observing the play and other activities of children in preschool settings usually find clear gender-related differences in the activities and social interactions of boys and girls. To generalize, girls often keep close to the staff, engage in rather peaceful activities like drawing, playing with dolls, or various forms of role-play. Boys often go to places where members of the staff are not present. They engage in physically active play like running, climbing, biking, pillow fighting, and in constructive play in the sandbox or with toy bricks. Both boys and girls engage in constructive play, but girls more often construct social settings and roles while boys construct physical things like roads and huts. Both boys and girls engage in role-play. Boys are often heroes, warriors, and different kinds of craftsmen, while girls more often play the roles of mothers or babies, nurses, models, and women-friends.

Lots of individual exceptions to these behavioral patterns do of course exist, but at a group level findings usually suggest that boys and girls do separate and different things, and often engage in play inspired by traditional male and female activities and patterns common in the surrounding society and culture. This might be said to be in opposition to the goal in the preschool curriculum that “The preschool should work to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles.”

Gender Issues—A Confusing Mixture of Facts, Theories, Ideologies, Values, and Attitudes

There are several different theories and assumptions in operation when issues concerning similarities and differences between men and women, and boys and girls, are being addressed. This is not the place to review such theories or assumptions. But obviously facts and experiences may be understood in very different ways. Gender issues concern deep and basic aspects of personality and identity. Gender issues also concern power, influence, and opportunities, and they are important factors in social and cultural structures and discourses. Discussions concerning gender issues often evoke strong emotions and “everyone” has an opinion about what is “normal” and how it should be. Many people consider these matters to be private values and personal beliefs that should not be questioned or imposed on others. A starting point for educational awareness and development of methods to promote emancipating equal opportunities is to realize and be sensitive to the cultural and social constructions of gender, to recognize gender norms, and be aware of how they restrict the scope of action for boys and for girls and their possibilities to develop their full capacities.

Recent and Current Developments within Early Childhood Education and Care

During the last 30 years of substantial expansion in access to public ECEC various efforts have been made to develop more equal opportunities for boys and girls. The efforts often have dealt with educational methods and activities, usually in the form of supplying girls with more “technical” and constructive material, activities, and guidance. There have also been efforts to break up ingrained opinions and habits among the children. These have included systematically organized joint activities to get boys and girls to cooperate, respect, and appreciate each other, and separate activities for girls and boys designed to stimulate them to try new activities and to practice abilities other than those “gender-labeled” activities typically found in the early childhood settings.

This kind of development work has raised the awareness of equal opportunities, but there is still a question of the extent to which such working methods are operating in the everyday activities of early childhood settings. In many places it is “business as usual,” and a large proportion of the staff members express the opinion that due to their individualistic approach to meeting the needs and interests of every single child, they do not differentiate based on gender and so do not see the need for special attention to be given to gender equity issues.

In more recent research, focus has actually been placed on how staff members act in relation to the children. In general terms, the results quite clearly indicate that the teachers do interact with boys and girls in different ways. There is an obvious risk that an individualistic approach conceals the fact that girls and boys as groups are treated differently and that these conditions effectively contribute to conserving traditional gender patterns.

In the last few years much attention has been paid to self-evaluative methods for teachers to observe and analyze their own actions. One focus has been on gender issues. The staff members often realize with astonishment how they respond to and deal with boys and girls in quite different ways without being aware of it. This growth in awareness often leads to an interest in identifying the ways in which the physical design of the ECE settings, as well as materials and activities, constrain the childrens' construction of identities and abilities, and how changes might give the children opportunities to develop a wider range of their personalities.

To reveal ingrained gender behavior may also give gender-mixed groups of staff reason to examine their interaction patterns and division of labor and help them avoid getting stuck in traditional gender roles. Actions taken to get more men to work in early childhood education and care have not thus far shown any great results. It is not, however, only a question of getting more men interested in preschool work, but also of analyzing and, to a certain degree, changing traditional female-dominated patterns concerning how work with children "normally" should be done. To achieve the goal of finding a substantially higher proportion of men working in preschool settings, there is a need for a change in attitudes and gender order in the whole society. This will probably take a long time. If early childhood education and care is successful in reaching the curriculum goal of counteracting traditional gender patterns and gender roles, this might help prepare the ground for the next generation of men to be more open to work with children, care, and education.

A specific initiative on a national level to promote gender equity in early childhood education is the attempt to train so called "gender educators." A gender educator is usually a preschool teacher who is offered specially designed university-level courses on gender issues. The idea is that every municipality should have some "gender educators" employed, to supervise groups of staff in their efforts to raise gender awareness and to develop their preschool activities in a more gender equal direction.

The previously mentioned government committee titled The Delegation for Gender Equality in Pre-School is another initiative at the national level. This committee is commissioned to compile the present knowledge and experiences concerning work for gender equity in preschool, and analyze different factors that have an influence on gender issues in that setting. In order to test ideas and collect experiences the committee is providing financial support for development work at a number of preschools. The work of the committee started in the beginning of 2004. In summer 2006 results and recommendations for changes and developments will be presented in an effort to strengthen gender equity and equal opportunities in preschool.

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Björn Flising

Quality in Swedish Early Childhood Education

Introduction

The Swedish School Act stipulates that the municipalities are obliged to provide preschool activities of high quality. In preschool settings, personnel should be present with the appropriate educational background and experience to satisfy children's need for care and education. The size and composition of the groups of children should be appropriate and the settings should be suitable for their purposes. Activities should be based on the individual needs of each child.

Issues linked to quality and equivalence in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) have received an increased importance in Sweden during the past decades. One reason for this has been the changes in steering and supervision mechanisms that have taken place on national as well as local levels. The model previously dominant within the public sector was based on centrally formulated rules, regulations, and guidelines aimed at guaranteeing ECEC programs of high and uniform quality, and enforced through the system of state grants. The past twenty years have seen an increase in decentralization of decisions from national to local level, manifested in the 1991 Local Government Act, which provides a framework to strengthen local democracy.

Different Types of Quality Definitions

There are many different ways of defining (and measuring) quality within the ECEC arena. One of the most common definitions might be referred to as *structural quality*, and takes as its point of departure the frameworks and prerequisites of ECEC activities, often expressed in objectively measurable variables such as size and composition of children's groups, adult/child ratios, or educational level of the personnel. Factors linked to physical design of settings or outdoor environments might also be included among structural variables of interest. In Sweden, annual statistics, gathered systematically at the national level, give a good picture of changes over time in group sizes, adult/child ratios, personnel education, etc. Such statistics have been available since the 1960s.

During the 1990s, productivity in Swedish ECEC (measured in costs per hour) increased substantially. The number of children in ECEC settings increased by about 30 percent, whereas total costs remained the same. During the same period, changes in a number of structural variables were observed. The number of children in an average preschool group increased from 13.8 in 1990, to 16.6 in 1998. There was also an increase in the number of children per adult, from 4.2 to 5.6, during the period. In 2003, the average group size had increased to 17.2.

These negative changes have raised the issue of whether municipalities are able to maintain a quality level which meets the requirements stipulated in the School Act, in relation to good care and education based on the needs of each individual child. In the 2004/2005 Bill to the Riksdag, the National Government did include an extra three-year grant for the municipalities to employ an additional 6,000 preschool teachers and child minders, and make possible the decrease in the number of children in the preschool groups and a more favorable adult/child ratio.

Research has shown that there is no clear-cut relationship between costs and quality. However, studies investigating these relationships have also shown that socially disadvantaged groups of children are suffering more from a deterioration in ECEC structural quality than children from families with more resources. Solidarity goals and equal rights to good quality ECEC are issues highlighted in these types of quality discussions.

A different way of defining quality takes as its starting point the parents using the ECEC system, in their roles as citizens, clients, or “customers.” *Quality of services* now becomes the main focus of interest. In measuring quality of services, issues like full coverage, efficient administration and distribution of places, access, opening hours, or parental freedom to choose among different ECEC alternatives might be at focus. National and local child-care surveys, conducted regularly, have until recently provided politicians and administrators with information on parental needs and preferences in these respects. During the past decade, municipalities have also systematically been using “consumer surveys” as ways of measuring parental level of satisfaction with existing ECEC activities, thereby relying on subjective quality ratings based on parental norms or preferences of what might be important aspects of ECEC programs.

High level of access or availability of alternative forms of ECEC programs might be defined as high *quality of results* linked to service level. Other result-focused quality definitions might be more geared toward measuring effects of education and care activities on children’s development and learning. The goals presented in the Swedish National Curriculum for Pre-school specify the desired quality targets in the preschools. In the curriculum, goals and guidelines are being specified for the following areas: norms and values; development and learning; influence of the child, preschool and home; and cooperation between the preschool class, the school, and the leisure-time center. The goals specify the orientation of the work of the preschool and set out the qualitative development desired. The goals in the curriculum are formulated as *goals to strive for*, rather than *goals to be attained*. Thus they describe processes rather than final outcomes from preschooling.

Evaluating capacities, competences, or developmental progress of individual children are responsibilities to be carried out by ECEC personnel in cooperation with the child's parents.

Quality might therefore also be defined and evaluated in relation to pedagogical processes. *Process quality* refers to the quality of activities and relationships in the ECEC settings. High process quality calls for well-functioning relationships among personnel and children, and carefully planned activities, systematically analyzed and evaluated. Mutually trusting relationships among personnel and parents have also been found to be important. Measurement of processes has been conducted, for example, with the use of the internationally well-known ECERS scale, adapted to Swedish circumstances. Swedish research has found high quality, as defined by the ECERS scale, to be closely linked to parental feelings of trust, involvement, and understanding of the norms, values, and working methods of the personnel in the ECEC settings. In many Swedish preschools, there has been a growing interest in recent years in using pedagogical documentation as a tool for developing pedagogical work. In this context, the municipal preschools in **Reggio Emilia** in Italy have served as important sources of inspiration.

To improve process quality, resources might be well spent on the continuing education of ECEC personnel. One example of such an attempt to indirectly improve pedagogical processes is the ongoing, nationwide program to implement the new curriculum, financed through the National Agency of Education. Preschool teachers, primary school teachers, and leisure-time pedagogues meet to discuss fundamental values, goal definitions, and guidelines presented in the curriculum in cooperation with university teachers and researchers. In the basic university level teacher training, courses on research methods and evaluations have recently been added to the program to meet the increased demands for systematic analyses and evaluations of activities in the ECEC settings.

“Correct” vs “Incorrect” Definitions of Quality

There is an ongoing discussion among the various ECEC stakeholders in Sweden as to definitions and measurements of ECEC quality. Researchers and ECEC professionals might address the issue of quality from the perspective of expert groups that are likely to know what constitutes an optimal environment for children's development and learning. *High or low* quality is related to absolute standards and goals as defined in this way. Parents might look at quality from a different angle, including flexible opening hours, affordable fees, and particular personal interests in the equation. Municipalities, trying to adapt a “consumer perspective” or a cost reducing “lowest acceptable quality” perspective, might prefer a more subjective and relativistic *right or wrong* quality definition.

Political decisions made by elected representatives on the national level in the Riksdag, based on the principles of a multi-party democracy such as Sweden, are representing the collective sharing of responsibilities. In discussions around quality criteria in ECEC, some people have seen a danger in a situation when the individual, subjective goals of the parents, as specified in “consumer surveys,” are given higher priority than, for example, the collective goals defined in the preschool curriculum, creating a situation where ideologically shared values and

norms at the macro level, linked to solidarity and sharing of resources, might be overruled at the micro level, when quality in an individual ECEC setting is to be defined.

Present Development

In 2004 the Swedish National Agency for Education published a report presenting the first national evaluation of the preschool after the reform of 1998, when the preschool received its own curriculum and became the first step into the overall education system. The aim of the evaluation was to examine how the preschool has developed in different respects after the reform, and also to provide a progress report on the consequences of the reform. The evaluation also indicates the important choices confronting the preschool in its future development. Overall the results show that preschools have differing opportunities to carry out their task in a satisfactory way. Factors such as size of child groups and the catchment area of the preschool can explain a large part of these differences. Preschools in stable areas, as a rule, face better conditions for adapting their activities to the individual needs of children, to satisfy children in need of support, and to work together in good ways with parents. The report makes clear that certain preschools face inadequate conditions to carry out their tasks. In many of the multicultural, segregated, urban areas in Sweden the need for more resources linked to language and language development has been stressed. There is a need for educated mother tongue teachers, and for the inservice training of ECEC personnel in creating learning situations for children with Swedish as their second language. In the 2004–2005 Legislation, the government stressed the importance of clarifying in the national curriculum the multicultural responsibility of the preschool to strengthen childrens' language and identity development, and to make clear that one of the goals for preschools to strive for is to give every child with a mother tongue other than Swedish support to develop the competence to communicate in Swedish as well as in the home language.

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Lars Gunnarsson

Democracy: The Curriculum Foundation for Swedish Preschools

The focus here is on “the democratic project” to develop and come to a resolution about a Swedish national curriculum for preschool—how the perspective in the curriculum is formed and what this means for both pedagogues and children in preschool. How can the approach to children, their development, and learning

be related to the culture and to theories about children? And how can pedagogues, parents, and children be implicated in the intentions of the curriculum?

The Swedish Early Childhood Education and Care System was already a strongly regulated sector in the 1960s. There were guiding principles for the area per child, the security, the number of children per adult and in relation to the children's different ages, and so on. During the past 20 years, however, the movement has been toward a deregulated and goal-guided system. This means that the goals for different public sectors are made explicit, while the responsibility for carrying out, or working toward, these goals becomes a question for the people involved—in this case, parents, pedagogues, and children. One could claim that behind this way of guiding the education lies a democratic strategy to make people implicated and engaged in their own lives. During the 1990s both the preschool and the school system in Sweden underwent more extensive changes than ever before.

A breakthrough in the change of preschool activities was established through "The pedagogic program for preschool" developed by the National Board of Health and Welfare in 1987. *Learning* as a conception was brought into view and became, step by step, accepted within preschool. Earlier, *development* had been the leading notion.

In 1996, the responsibility for the preschool was taken over by the Ministry of Education, which can be seen as a first indication of the inclusion of preschool within a "life-long learning" approach, and concretely within the educational system.

In a 1997 governmental declaration it was settled that preschool, school, and after-school centers should be integrated, in order to improve the first, important year in compulsory school. As a first step in this work, a unified goal document for the six-year-olds in preschool, the compulsory school and the after-school centers was composed. When this first step was completed it was decided that the preschool class (the six-years-old in school) should be regarded as a specific school form—the beginning of the next step beyond preschool. A committee was appointed to draft a proposal for a new goal document for preschool (1–5-years-old). To strengthen the pedagogic dimension of preschool, facilitate the long-term planning for the work in preschool, and make it easier to follow up and evaluate the goals, great importance should be laid on the goal document's structure and content. During the work in the committee a number of consultative groups, including the teachers' union, different interest organizations, people responsible for public education, and the Association of Local Authorities were involved. All this led to a strong political agreement and support for the curriculum proposal.

The Curriculum as a Regulation and as Goals to Strive Toward

The fact that the curriculum for preschool was given the same status as the curriculum for public schooling is viewed as a guarantee that the work and the activities in preschool will be equal for all children. At the same time it could be said that as a result of this change the preschool teachers' freedoms are going to decrease. Earlier, a preschool might state that "Here in our preschool, we are interested in music and therefore we mostly work with music." The goal statement

might also say: “We do not work with mathematics, because children will have to deal with that in school soon enough.” Of course it will still be possible to have preschools with special interests and aims, but it will not be possible to exclude certain goals, expressed as *striving goals*.

When you think about the concept “curriculum,” it is important to take into consideration that it should be a plan for learning, in which the *values* for the work in the preschool as an institution, and what the *mission* of the preschool is, have been stipulated. The goal document for preschool is founded on the same principles and values as the curriculum for school, and partly follows the same structure. The individual child’s development and learning are in focus, and the goals are intrinsically qualitative rather than quantitative, with focus on changing children’s knowledge and their way of making sense of the world around them.

What is comparatively special with the Swedish curriculum is that the goals, with reference to the perspective on learning, have gained a supreme and central role. However, there is practically nothing written about *how* the pedagogues should work with the children. Still there are guidelines for how they should work or act in specific ways with children, in order to promote children’s development toward the goals.

The Five Goals of the Swedish Curriculum

There are five groups of goals: (1) norms and values, (2) development and learning, (3) children’s influence, (4) preschool and home, and (5) cooperation with school. One or two examples for each of these goals are presented below—

1. Norms and values

Preschool shall actively and consciously influence and stimulate children to develop an understanding of the common democratic values in our society, and help them understand that in the future, they can be part of these. Preschool should strive to ensure that each child develops

- his or her ability to discover, reflect on, and work out their position on different ethical dilemmas and fundamental questions on life in daily reality, and
- respect for all forms of life as well as care for the surrounding environment.

2. Development and learning

Preschool shall form a unity where the education is built on care, nurturing, and education. The activities shall stimulate play, creativity, and joyful learning, and use children’s interest for new experiences to learn knowledge and skills. The flow of ideas and diversity should be explored.

Preschool should try to ensure that children develop

- their identity and feel secure in themselves,
- their ability to listen, narrate, reflect, and express their own views,
- a rich and varied spoken language and the ability to communicate with others and to express their thoughts, and
- their vocabulary and concepts, the ability to play with words, an interest in the written language, and an understanding of symbols as well as their communicative functions.

Interrelated in the development and learning goals are “everyday life skills.” These are corresponding to a number of qualities (in terms of properties and skills) like cooperative skills, responsibility, initiative, flexibility, reflectivity, active attitudes, communicative skills, problem solving skills, critical stance, creativity, as well as the ability to learn how to learn. These different qualities are seen as general and part of all school subjects, and form a central dimension of preparing the children and students of today for the society of tomorrow. There are also goals focused on making sense of the world around the child, and aspects relating to culture, natural science, reading and writing, mathematics, and so on.

3. Children’s influence

To develop a base for understanding democracy, children must be deeply involved. Children’s social development presupposes that they, according to age and capabilities, be given responsibility for their own actions and for the environment in preschool. Preschool should try to ensure that children develop

- the ability to express their thoughts and views and thus have the opportunity of influencing their own situation, and
- the ability to understand and act in accordance with democratic principles by participating in different kinds of cooperation and decision making.

The idea is that democracy should be treated both as a content and as a method in every day life with children.

4. Preschool and home

The person(s) having the legal guardianship of the child are responsible for the child’s upbringing and development. Preschool is meant to be a complement to the home, which provides the best possible conditions for every child to develop richness and many-sidedness. The preschool should

- maintain, on an on-going basis, a dialogue with parents on the child’s well-being, development, and learning, both in and outside the preschool,
- take due account of parents’ viewpoints when planning and carrying out activities, and
- make sure that parents are involved in assessing the activities of the preschool.

5. Cooperation with school

It is important that there be a trusting cooperation between preschool and school (including after-school care). The cooperation should be based on the national and local goals and on directions valid for each activity. When the time comes to transfer from preschool to school it is the preschool staff’s responsibility to find appropriate ways of rounding off and concluding the preschool period.

Curriculum Content

From the point of view of content, the most overriding theme in the curriculum is *democracy*. This not only shows in the perspective on learning, both of values and norms, but also in the emphasis placed upon children’s participation and codetermination, as well as upon the cooperation with other participants in the home and in school.

The curriculum is now a regulation, which means that every public preschool has to work in accordance with these goals. This is expected to raise the quality of preschools all over the country. Privately organized preschools are not legally

obliged to follow the curriculum, but it can be assumed that it will play a major role also in these settings, since quality is one of the factors for obtaining state money.

Curriculum Methods

In the national curriculum very little is mentioned about methods, or ways of working with children to reach the goals. Delegating methods, organization, etc., to the pedagogues is part of the decentralization efforts, and also a move away from earlier guidelines. The pedagogues are expected to have learnt about the methods during their own educational preparation, and there is also the assumption that there are several ways to work in order to reach the common goals.

The curriculum is mirroring an openness when it comes to teachers' methods and ways of organizing the work. Most of all, it becomes important that the pedagogue covers a wide range of methods, since children learn in different ways, and the pedagogue is expected to be able to meet each individual child in its efforts to understand the world and to master its own life.

What could be claimed more specifically is that content and form are related to each other and consequently have to be integrated. In other words, to use good methods without providing an engaging content, and the other way around, to provide an interesting content without good methods for making children engaged, will not be sufficient.

Even if the goals are formulated in this way, there are still several obvious connections to the school's subjects. For example, preschool should strive to insure that children develop the following:

- their ability to discover and use mathematics in meaningful contexts and situations,
- their appreciation of the basic characteristics of the concept of number, measurement, and form, as well as an ability to orient themselves in time and space.

One can imagine that it takes much thinking and great participation to implement the national goals within the specific age group or child group with which the pedagogues are working. It is most important that the goals direct children's attention toward the surrounding world, which can be interpreted and described by using mathematics, scientific conceptions, and so on, and not toward the school subject as such.

In conclusion, it can be said that there are goals to strive toward, but how to get along in this striving becomes a pedagogic challenge.

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Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson

Early Childhood Teacher Education in Sweden

Introduction

The personnel in Swedish preschools and school-age child-care settings are comparatively well educated. Less than 5 percent of the more than 100,000 employees lack education specific to working with children, and more than 50 percent have a university-level education as preschool teachers or leisure-time pedagogues. Gender distribution among the personnel is very uneven, however. Only 6 percent are men, which has remained the same throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

In addition to preschool teachers and leisure-time pedagogues, childminders educated in the Swedish secondary schools make up about 40 percent of the work force in Swedish early care and education (ECE). Formerly, the program for childminders included (in addition to compulsory courses in mathematics, language, and social sciences) a combination of theory and practice to provide the students with the basic skills in childminding and developmental psychology. The program has recently been extended from two to three years of schooling, and broadened to include a wider range of options in the area of children and leisure-time activities (out-of-school time care).

There are also more than 8,000 *family child minders* in Sweden, providing child care in their own homes. A large majority of this group has completed the childminder training program, or 50–100 hours of mandatory course work provided by the municipality as an introduction to the family day care occupation. In recent years, a new one-year training program, with a national curriculum, has been arranged by the municipalities as part of their adult education program. This education is intended for students who have graduated from programs in the upper secondary schools and want to be qualified as childminders, or students who want to upgrade their existing (for some, rather short) childminder training. The entire program is practicum oriented; students spend extensive time in placements under qualified supervision.

Historical Background

In 1898, the first training course (four months of duration) was created for those who wanted to become teachers of young children. This educational initiative grew out of and supported the charitable work performed by unmarried middle class women in the early institutions for young children that developed during the second half of the 1800s. Two years later this initial course was extended to two years and given the name *Froebelseminariet*.

In 1996, federal responsibility for the preschools was transferred from the Ministry of Health and Welfare to the Ministry of Education and Science. Thus

preschool became the first link in a broad and integrated education system covering the ages 1–19, from preschool to the end of upper secondary school. In 1998, the first national curriculum for children aged 1 to 5 years was issued. Two other national curricula exist: one for the preschool class (age 6) and compulsory school (ages 7–16), the other for upper secondary school (ages 16–19). In combination these three curricula unified the education system under a common educational philosophy. This unification process has had significant implications for teacher education.

Recent Developments

Toward the end of the 1990s, a new Teacher Education Commission was appointed by the government to set up goals for a completely new form of teacher education. This group suggested a comprehensive reform of all seven existing teacher education programs, including the one for preschool teachers. Their work resulted in a proposition put forward by the government to parliament, which was passed in the year 2000.

Basic principles. The reform discussed above is one of the most radical reforms in the entire history of Swedish teacher education. It implies a shift in the teaching profession from teaching to learning, from giving courses to enhancing competencies, and from being curriculum implementers to curriculum makers. The following are some of the basic principles for the new integrated teacher education:

- Formal education starts in preschool.
- The notion of life-long learning is emphasized.
- Learning is a social as well as an educational process.
- School provides an arena for social and cultural encounters.
- Teachers are mentors who are expected to scaffold and support children's overall growth and development.
- Education should support and stimulate children's creativity, imagination, flexibility, and problem-solving ability.

Program requirements. Three closely linked areas of education make up the new initial training program (see Box 1 below). The first comprises a unified interdisciplinary curriculum focusing on professionally relevant areas. This should preferably be offered to all prospective teacher students, regardless of specialization, and be spread over the entire length of training. For teacher candidates wishing to work with young children, the total requirement covers at least 140 credit points, or 3.5 years of full-time studies. Each credit point equals one academic full-time week of study. Each semester comprises 20 credit points. Completion of this program qualifies a student to teach in preschools (ages 1 to 5), preschool classes (6-year-olds), and the first years of the compulsory school (ages 7 to 11), as well as in school-age child care and programs for mother tongue teachers. (Children in Sweden start compulsory school in the autumn of the year they turn seven.)

Box 1. Integrated Teacher Education Program in Sweden since 2000**General Education Studies**

- 60 credit points (at least 10 in work placements). These studies should comprise both areas of knowledge central to the teaching profession, e.g., education, special education, child and youth development, and interdisciplinary, cross-cutting themes such as socialization, democracy, and basic values/principles.

Subject Studies (subject enrichment)

- At least 40 credit points (10 in work placements). These studies should correspond to age-related subject areas, e.g., language, maths.

Specialist In-depth Study

- 20 credit points, building on previous knowledge, deepening a previous specialization, broadening an area of competence, or introducing a complementary perspective, e.g., integrative pre-school, sociology, adult education, international perspectives.

Program organization. Each university or university college in Sweden organizes these three elements in different ways. As a general principle, the structure should be such that students first begin to choose a specialization when they are well into their teacher education program.

For students aiming to specialize in early education, the program could have the following structure:

Semester 1: General Education Studies, 20 credit points

Semester 2: Subject Studies, 20 credit points

Semester 3: Subject Studies, 20 credit points

Semester 4: General Education Studies, 20 credit points

Semester 5: Specialist In-depth Studies, 20 credit points

Semester 6: Specialist In-depth Studies, 20 credit points

Semester 7: General Education Studies, 20 credit points

Within the framework of these three areas, students will be required to produce a dissertation accounting for at least 10 credit points. The belief is that this will help students to reflect systematically on the knowledge they have acquired in relation to their future profession. Furthermore, to prepare students for both the municipal preschool and the compulsory school sector, as well as for work in schools with specific pedagogical and methodological profiles, the new integrated teacher education should include different pedagogical approaches and methods. A new dimension of this teacher education model is that it will give practicing teachers the opportunity to take part in the undergraduate programs as part of their in-service training, and link them to proposed research programs.

Reflection, scientific knowledge, and integration are distinctive features of the new teacher education program, both separately and in combination. Another important aspect is the freedom of choice for the individual student to design his or her own program from a wide selection of elective courses. The program aims to support the students as they become reflective practitioners, and to

include training in research methods to enhance their scientific knowledge base. Integration is desired during the general education studies, where students aiming to specialize in different levels of the education system will be given a common shared foundation of knowledge in the theory and practice of teaching.

Evaluation of the New Structure: Emerging Issues

Shortly after introduction of the new teacher education program several issues of concern emerged, recently highlighted in an evaluation of all existing teacher education programs throughout Sweden conducted by the National Agency for Higher Education (2005). These concerns include integration, the impact of general education studies, and recruitment issues.

Integration. Integration of teacher preparation across early education, primary education, and secondary education has not been altogether easy to achieve. Previous studies indicate that one of the problems related to integration has to do with the fact that different students seem to have different views of knowledge needs in teacher education, and therefore their investment in the various components of the teacher education program vary distinctly (Beach, 2000).

General education studies. Some students perceive the general education studies to be too general in character, and therefore hard to apply to their prospective teaching profession. Problems are also related to the far-reaching freedom of choice for students throughout the new program. That is, when students shape their own education through course selection, there are distinct implications for recruitment and teacher retention for the early childhood years. Previously, recruitment issues were solved by sorting students ahead of time into various programs aiming at a distinctive sector of the teaching profession (i.e., elementary school teaching or preschool teaching). Now this has become an internal matter for the individual student, who is expected to find his or her own unique path through the education system. The national evaluation indicates that students need much more guidance to insure that they design their education in such a way that they become attractive to prospective employers.

Recruitment and retention. Furthermore, the number of students aiming to become teachers of young children has dropped considerably following the new reforms. There are several possible explanations for this. Students may perceive that the working conditions are better in the compulsory schools, due to more desirable working hours and more planning time. Additionally, salaries and status of teachers working in the compulsory school system might be perceived to be higher. Finally, in the “old” integrated preschool teacher education program, which was well grounded in practice, the students in each teacher education program may have had a better chance to grow and develop a collectively shared teacher identity. In the new structure, developing a teacher identity has become much more of an individual responsibility.

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Maelis Karlsson Lohmander

Play and Learning—An Integrated Wholeness

In this discussion of the dimensions of learning in play and the dimensions of play in learning, we use the playful interaction between children and teachers as a starting point. We want to illustrate and discuss the didactic aspects that can possibly promote, or alternatively prevent, interactions between play and learning dimensions. We begin by briefly describing some characteristics of play and learning, respectively, that are of interest for this study. The starting point for our discussion of the conception of play as well as learning concerns experiencing and creating the meaning of the surrounding world. By using an empirical example of playful interactions between teachers and children, we will try to illustrate what happens between children and teachers in terms of play and learning.

It could be said that play is an important part of children's lives and their creation of meaning. In play, communication, creation and experiencing of meaning, reciprocity, and a feeling of solidarity between children take place. The worlds children create in play as well as learning are built upon children's experiences and are created within an interaction and reciprocity, but also involve aspects such as power. It is also conceivable that play challenges creativity and problem solving. In play children can experience their rights, participation, and influence. As children are "forced" to negotiate about play, test the quality of their arguments, and encounter other perspectives, their experiences become visible, both to themselves and to others. In play children learn from each other, and since the children's age and experiences often vary in the play groups, the learning will be challenged. These differences also give the children opportunities to experiment with, expand, and change their play worlds, and in that way develop new understanding.

Play as well as learning is considered to be a question of making sense of the surrounding world. In this process the idea of "as if" has been strong within play research, but we will point to the fact that the same idea applies to learning. It is in the situations where the child can go beyond the here-and-now situation and experience something else that new learning comes about.

Let us now look at an example from preschool praxis and search for dimensions of learning and play. How do the teachers and the children approach or deal with these dimensions?

Example

This preschool consists of 16 children aged between one and three-and-a-half years. Seven of them have an ethnic background other than Swedish. During the mealtime everyone is gathered in one room, sitting at three tables placed next to each other in a row. It is cramped around the tables, and everyone can see and hear what happens in the room. At this particular lunch there are fifteen children and four teachers at the table.

Suddenly Yani (3yrs., 6 mo.) discovers how the sun is reflecting off his bib, making a pattern in the ceiling. Yani laughs and looks up at the ceiling. He points and says delightedly: "giraffe." He turns his body back and forth, making the pattern in the ceiling come and go. All the children watch; the teachers laugh. "Look," says one of the teachers excitedly. Adela (2yrs., 8 mo.), Amir (2yrs., 5 mo.), and Marga (1 yr., 6 mo.) cry out loudly and laugh. "It's amazing that he saw this. Such fantasy, to see a giraffe," says the teacher delightedly. "Children, did you see that Yani can do tricks?" she continues. Yani smiles happily and looks proud. "Giraffe," he repeats. It is lively around the table, the children point excitedly, and both children and teachers laugh.

What we first of all could ask ourselves is whether the situation described above could be defined as play. If we accept the fact that a play situation is characterized by "such as" and fantasy as our starting point, it becomes obvious that both these aspects are involved. The sun reflection in the ceiling represents something, and to the participants it looks like a giraffe. The play allows the discovery of this reflection to be something else. Also excitement seems to be involved, which we can see in the eagerness and the liveliness expressed by everyone around the table. Something unexpected has happened that everyone takes an active interest in. For a moment time stops and everyone follows the reflections in the ceiling. A common creation of meaning seems to become possible.

We can also see how the teacher gets involved in the children's play. Spontaneously the boy's curiosity and experiencing are being utilized. Jointly everyone takes some time to examine the boy's discovery and the children and the teachers share the joy. In spite of all this happening during mealtime, which makes the situation somewhat confused, free scope is given to the occasion and all children are allowed to be involved. Most of all it seems that it is the joy of discovery that is made apparent in this situation. One single child's discovery becomes a collective act in which all participate and direct their attention toward the pattern on the ceiling created by the bib. The teachers show their appreciation of the boy's discovery. They focus on his interest and encourage his initiative as well as the meaning he gives to the reflection on the ceiling. When he happily exclaims that it is a giraffe, the teachers share his joy and the other children are invited to take part in the joyful discovery. The teachers name his discovery and confirm his competence. *It's amazing that he saw this. What a fantasy.* They also point out to the other children that Yani can create something, *Yani can do tricks.* The situation could be interpreted as a moment of play, containing spontaneity, joy, social interaction, and symbolism, in which the process of interplay is important. We could, perhaps, say that there is a common ownership of the play.

We can also look upon the situation as a joyful process of learning. The children are encouraged to observe, discover, and imagine. Probably children's taken-for-granted way of experiencing the world is affected; they become fascinated and their interest is directed toward the reflection in the ceiling. The children become occupied by the pattern in the ceiling, and their joy is evident. The children's consciousness (and life world) focuses on an advanced phenomenon in their surrounding world. The sun's reflection is discerned as a pattern, which forms a picture and represents a symbol for something else in the world. The situation also takes place beyond here and now. Starting out from the actual situation at the dining table, both the children's and the teachers' interest is moved and becomes focused on the picture in the ceiling and its movements. Furthermore, the situation consists of communication, experiencing, and giving meaning. The teachers and the children identify the occurred phenomenon and give it a meaning. Regardless of what this meaning might be and what occurs to the individual child, we believe that the occasion has potential for learning, which is also full of joy and reciprocity. The teacher has an active role in her permissive and open attitude and the way of encouraging and sharing focus of interest with the children.

Discussion

The example we have been analyzing is a common situation in the world of the preschool. Let us start with what children spontaneously, or with the aid of teachers, direct their attention toward in this observation. We notice that the children are striving for an understanding of different phenomena in their own world. It is the child himself who spontaneously experiences and creates meaning by discovering the reflection in the ceiling. In this observation, it is through the child's initiative that the teachers and the other children notice the reflection of the sun. The child's attention is captured by, and becomes absorbed by, a phenomenon in the surrounding world. The child is permitted to stay in his experience and the teachers and the other children, sharing his joy, join him in his experiencing. The teachers contribute to the mutual experience, both by sharing it and by naming it. In this situation we find that play and learning are integrated. The children experience something new, which they create in the situation. They go beyond what they normally do at the dining table—have a meal, and they are permitted to be playful and to fantasize. There is something beyond here and now—a “such as.”

In our example, the act of play and learning is to follow the child, and encouragement, imitation, and communication become prominent in the situation. What we have tried to illustrate with this observation is the importance of the adult when it comes to the development of a situation of interplay, and how this situation will appear to the children. We claim that teachers integrate play and learning, both in spontaneous situations and in situations in which the teacher might have taken the initiative.

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Eva Johansson and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson

Early Childhood Literacy in Sweden

Introduction

During the 1990s, the Swedish Early Childhood Education and Care system changed from being more of a concern of family policy to being more a part of educational policy. This was manifested in the shift in government responsibilities from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Science, and in the presentation of the first national curriculum for preschools, which came into effect in 1998. There are also changes in society at large connected with communications technology, with home PCs, the Internet, and being able to send text messages via mobile phones. The discussion here will focus mainly on the intersection between preschool and school. Do these institutions share the same view of literacy, play, and the importance of learning, and of the use of digital learning environments as tools for playing and learning? By the concept *early childhood literacy*, we mean various creative ways of using the written language, corresponding to the concepts “broader textual concept” and “multimodality.”

Our point of departure is that every child learns to read and write in his or her own way, depending on the child's opportunities, experiences, interests, the circumstances in which the child is involved, and the people with whom he or she is interacting. What you learn depends on the context. The historical and cultural context to which you belong determines the value of different types of competences. In the Western culture, formal linguistic writing and reading skills are highly valued, and considered essential competences. Expressing oneself in writing is a cultural activity, which develops as a result of the human need to communicate and keep records. Written language and written communication are in a period of change; their tools have changed in recent years with the advent of virtual and digital environments. New concepts are being used, such as a broader concept of language including other forms of expression than the verbal one, for instance, the language of music, art, and movement. One also speaks of multimodality as a broader textual concept, meaning that several ways of expressing and addressing, apart from text, are used in communication.

Theoretical Framework

Our didactic starting point, that children's learning should be understood from the perspective of the learner, has its roots in a phenomenographical and variation theory perspective. The phenomenographical research approach addresses questions that influence learning and understanding in a pedagogical environment. The learner's perspective is in focus. Researchers Marton and Booth describe the world as constituted as an internal relation between the learner and the environment. Individuals experience the world in different ways, and this affects their behavior in different situations. If you wish to understand how an individual handles a situation or a problem, you also have to understand how she/he experiences the situation or problem. Then some of the conditions of learning that are connected with the development of certain capacities will become apparent.

On the basis of many years of phenomenographical research, in which the learner's perspective has been central, Pramling Samuelsson and Asplund Carlsson have developed ideas leading to a theory of learning in the context of preschool—a developmental pedagogical approach. The theory has evolved in close collaboration with preschool teachers in different research projects. This theory states that playing and learning are inseparable in the world of the child. Children's interests and experiences cross the boundaries between subject areas. The teacher is challenged to direct the child's attention and interest to the learning object in a way that creates meaning for the child.

The sociocultural perspective also serves as an important theoretical base in understanding children's literacy, since we believe that becoming a literate person is learning to express oneself in writing as a communicative process and in the light of social and cultural conditions for children's knowledge and learning.

According to Lev Vygotsky, language and written language are the primary tools for learning. He writes about the external and internal functions of language. The external function is communicative, and the internal one is a tool for thinking. Written language has the same function as verbal language, but its external function is more concrete and observable. Its internal function is a tool for reflection and learning at a metacognitive level.

Kress states that children as well as adults create their own language and their own symbols on the basis of their own experiences and previous knowledge—quite contrary to many other theories and traditions in which man is seen as a user of an accepted language, signs, and symbols. Kress also claims that speech and writing are a form of communication designed to be maximally intelligible to the participants in a communicative situation. In an initial phase, children's early writing can only be understood by themselves.

For teachers in preschools and schools to be able to encourage, react to, and contribute to developing early childhood literacy, it is of vital importance for them to understand how children can learn to read and write and what role the teacher has in the development of early childhood literacy. Research is showing that children adopt an approach to learning to write at an early stage, and that this tends to be stable.

But because of different traditions and educational backgrounds, teachers in preschools and schools might not have a common approach to children's learning to write. The process might be interrupted when children move up from

preschool to school. Here they might not meet teachers who will continue to support the learning process started in the preschool. The writing and reading process that take place in the classroom might not proceed from the perspective of the participant, and learning might not be seen as a communicative and social process in which the children could take part and construct their own knowledge and understanding of expressing themselves in writing. If the teachers and the children are approaching the learning object in different ways, this might affect both children's learning and their future. Two characteristic text environments have been identified in the process of recent research—the narrative one and the passive one.

The following three criteria stand out in the *narrative* text environment:

- A message is communicated;
- Communication is clearly related to children's experiences and the contexts in which they are involved.
- Communication linked to literacy learning is used in a natural way in daily interaction.

In a *passive* text environment, one or more of these criteria are missing, and the form of the written language is more prominent than the communicative aspects. Methods and material are mixed, but there is no obvious communication or interaction between the text, the children, and the teachers.

From the results of the latest Swedish studies on children's literacy learning, we might conclude the following:

- Children establish an understanding and an approach to literacy learning at an early age, and that this tends to be stable.
- In preschool and school there are traditions and things that are taken for granted with regard to children's literacy learning that should be rethought in order to realize the goals of the curricula.
- If preschool and school fail to collaborate and if the teacher does not take the perspective of the learner/child in learning to express themselves in writing, the individual child will be affected negatively.
- It is a challenge for teachers in preschool to create an environment that stimulates early childhood literacy, an environment with rich opportunities for functional literacy.
- It should be possible to utilize and develop the multi-modal opportunities, such as pictures, colors, shapes, design, etc., that have been a tradition in preschool.

The results of our own research demonstrate the importance of the adults collaborating with the children in a literate environment. One of the most important development areas that we can observe in our studies is that, when encountering children, the teacher in preschool should draw their attention to the learning objects identified in the preschool curriculum. To collaborate with children in this way there must be a special emphasis on developing the particular competencies involved. This competence development could be built into the organization, using the approach exemplified by "practice-close" research, where the teacher trainer and the practicing teacher work together in the classroom to strengthen the teacher's capacity to "take the perspective of the learner."

Learning to write and using a written language are complex processes that take place in complex contexts. Researchers and practitioners are abandoning the view that learning to write is a formal skill that the child acquires through instruction and practice. The written language experienced by children is changing all

the time; what applies to one generation does not apply in the same way to their children and grandchildren. This makes it difficult for the one who is guiding children in the world of the written word. You have to take the child as your starting point—not your own childhood, but the child you are facing here and now.

From recent research we know that there is a considerable variation in how and what children think about learning to write and why they are good at writing, a variation in what they actually do. The role of the teacher and the environmental conditions then become important to analyze, that is, how the teacher in preschool arranges the textual environment. Observations indicate that the ability to interact in such an environment and with the preschool child that has not yet developed any understanding of the alphabetical system varies among teachers. The communicative function of written language as a learning object is a challenge for the teachers in preschool, as it requires an insight that they themselves lost when they acquired the skill of handling written language as a communicative system. Adopting the perspective of the learner in this area is a great challenge, but it is precisely what is needed when assisting a small child to become a person who can read and write.

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Karin Gustafsson and Elisabeth Mellgren

Ethics and Morality in the Swedish Preschool

One important aim in Swedish preschool is to encourage children to develop moral standards. Children are to learn to respect others' integrity, to help others in need, and to understand one another's feelings. The study described below is presented to illustrate present discussions, positions, and reflections on social, moral, and ethical development in Swedish early childhood education and care. Its aim was to investigate young children's experiences of values and norms concerning treatment of and behavior toward each other in every day life in the context of preschool.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical basis for the study is the concept of lifeworld. The lifeworld is related to a perceiving subject, a subject that experiences, lives, and acts upon the

world. The child creates meaning and is able to understand other people through its bodily being in the world. Thus we can understand that the child experiences and expresses morals through her/his body.

In international research, we find three main traditions for moral research: cognitive, emotional, and cultural. However, none of these traditions are internally homogeneous; they emphasize different aspects of children's morality and deal with different research questions.

The cultural *interactive* approach regards the interconnections among individual, contextual, and cultural aspects as the base from which morality develops. It also stresses that the child is active in interpreting and giving meaning to the world. Children, individually and with others, give their morality a specific character, shape, and meaning. This tradition lays closest to this investigation.

The Study

Nineteen children, ten boys and nine girls, one to three years of age, participated in the study. The children were part of a day-care group, in a small Swedish town. The daily interaction between the children was observed and video recorded for three days a week during a period of seven months. The analyses aimed to interpret and describe meanings from the children's perspective as expressed in their actions: What ethical values do children experience and express through their interaction? What norms do the children express and value? Values are positive or negative qualities (good or evil) that children express and experience in their own and in other children's behavior, acts, and attitudes. Norms refer to rules for behavior that children may express in their interaction.

Results

Two directions in the children's lived morality emerged from the data. The children defended and valued their *rights* and cared for *others' well-being*.

Rights. The children defended their rights to things and to share worlds with peers. They appeared to experience a type of compulsive attraction to things and thus experienced what is here called *a right to things*. Even from the youngest child's point of view, the children seemed to take for granted that things in preschool were waiting for them, *for* their inquiry. They protected their right to explore and play with things. But this self-evident relation to things was challenged by other children's demands for the same things. The children realized that things can be captured and held and as a consequence become another child's privilege. Thus the children saw that their rights must be justified. They developed norms that described how to act and what conditions gave rights. The norms concerned *control, time, and power*. These norms were relative to the situation and to each child's interpretation. Usually the child with control, whether through playing with the thing or keeping it in sight, had a right to it. In other words when the children experienced that things were under their control, they claimed their right to them. Time was also an important factor. The child that had had first control of the thing had the right to it. Thus previous control was a justification for maintaining the right to the things. Sometimes, however, power was an effective

way to defend and gain the right to things. The strongest child often gained such rights.

The right to things also gave power, that is, the right to decide about conditions for using things, what to do, and with whom to play. In addition, the children defended their rights to things in different ways according to which other children were involved. This suggests that children made inferences from previous experiences with other children in similar situations. The children developed a "tacit understanding" for moral rules between themselves and others.

The children expanded their experience of their self-evident right to things and they connected this right even to others. This does not mean that the other child's wishes were always satisfied or that one's own right was reduced. On the contrary, it seemed that a condition for the children to defend another's rights was that they did not experience that their own rights were questioned. When the children shared worlds, the right to things sometimes became shared. A further step in the expansion of the children's rights was the experience that things can be shared equally. The children came to value justice, they compromised, and offered compensations to each other, and showed that they had an idea of equality.

The *right to share worlds* concerned shared meanings and activity and developed from projects that children created together. When others made claims to these projects, the value of shared worlds became evident. The children defended their worlds and took for granted their right to decide about them. They expected other children to respect this right. Other children might be permitted to join but the right to decide this belonged to those children who started the project. Just as power is a way to get the right to things, it can also help children win the right to a shared world.

Participating in a shared world gave children added strength. In addition the children created hierarchical structures that could influence the right to share worlds. In this regard, to be alike was important. This likeness was based upon size, age, and interests. Children also preferred to create worlds with children whom they defined as playmates and those with more influence.

The well-being of others. The value of others' well-being was expressed in two ways: *caring* and *not harming others*. Care for others was shown when children tried to do what was good for others and contribute to their well-being. They helped others, created situations of pleasure for them, and gave them advice. This behavior was more usual toward children that were smaller and younger, but was also sometimes expressed to those of the same age whose need for assistance was clear. The children seemed to find smaller children vulnerable. Toward younger children, good actions were embodied in the entire manner of behaving. Children used cautious gestures. Their acts were careful and gentle. But the results also showed that children seemed to claim that adults had the prime responsibility for the well-being of others. The children often looked for adults in such situations and asked them for help.

The value of not harming others means that the children tried to stop actions that harmed others or blamed the children doing them. They supported others when they found that they needed comfort, defense, or protection. Children were sensitive to others' pain, sadness, and anger, and tried to comfort them.

They gave physical and psychological support. The children also showed that they were concerned for others' well-being by explaining and making excuses for their own acts, and by referring to the norm of not harming others. The fact that children alternated between strategies of kindness and of harm could also be an indication of the fact that they knew or had a vague idea that the harmful acts violated the value of not harming others.

Discussion

In the study just described, two features were found to be of importance in children's morality in preschool: a commitment to their rights and a responsiveness for others' well-being. The values of rights to things and to share worlds with others are interpreted as existential, as children's way of being. First, things talk to children and inspire them to act. Children in this study were engaged with things seriously, with joy, and with curiosity. They were absorbed by things and took them for granted, as if the things were there for them, to be explored and examined. Second, another way for children to exist was by creating worlds with others. These worlds consisted of common meaning and shared activities. They were physical and psychological, inspired by the room and the things in it, but could reach far away in time and space.

Children are compelled to explore things and to share their worlds. When someone threatens or stops a child's inquiry about things or their shared worlds, this also threatens their very existence. The children expressed anger, sadness, and a feeling of being wronged when this happened. Out of this emerges an existential and lived ethical value of rights. This way of describing children's rights differs from previous research. Previous researchers mainly described this phenomenon in terms of children's defense of possessions, ownership, space, or interactive space. Even though conflicts over toys are well documented in research, this is mainly discussed as children's capacity to share and as a beginning of their emerging sense of justice.

The right to things and to share worlds with others is intertwined with life in preschool. In preschool things have a prominent place. Things are chosen and arranged to inspire children to play and to learn. Life in preschool is also built upon a feeling of community. For every child it is of existential importance to be a part of the common life with peers, to have friends to play with. This is something that children are confronted with every day.

Another part of children's morality is their interest in the value of others' well-being. They care for and defend others. The value of others' well-being actualizes a concept of "responsiveness" developed by Blum (1994). Responsiveness means that children are touched by other children's predicaments and try to do something to change the situation for them. In addition, when caring for others they sometimes show a concern for the other child's reactions. The children carefully look for the other's response and can change their own behavior in accordance with the other's experiences.

The value of others' well-being has an existential character. Since children are parts of each other's lives, they are concerned with each other's well-being. However, while the value does have existential character it differs from the value

of rights. The value of others' well-being demands a focus upon the other. In this way it makes a greater demand on the child. This value becomes visible when children defend their rights, share worlds with others, and investigate the boundaries for other children's integrity. The discovery of others' well-being seems to be related to others' reactions, helplessness, vulnerability, and physical closeness.

Even if children's ethics cannot be separated from their lifeworlds and the grown ups included there, still they show that they discover values in their own relations with other children. In their life in preschool, things and friends are parts of their lifeworld and thereby highly valued. Out of these concrete relationships emerge values of rights and others' well-being.

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Eva Johansson

United Kingdom

Early Childhood Education in the United Kingdom

Introduction

The United Kingdom consists of four constituent countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The unrolling of domestic policy is determined within each country, and early years provision takes slightly different forms in each. This account focuses primarily on England rather than on the United Kingdom as a whole. Specific aspects of policy and provision are dealt with in more detail in the ten topic items elsewhere in the volume. Across all of the United Kingdom, however, there is an active debate about the regulatory role of government, and about the sustainability of the welfare state. In particular there are conflicting views about the impact of the for-profit sector on social cohesion. Inequality and social exclusion are regarded as undesirable, but there is not a consensus about how they might be addressed. These debates underwrite the delivery of various aspects of early years education and care.

The profile of early years education and care in the United Kingdom has changed considerably since 1997, when the Labour Government took office. From being a political backwater it has become a popular campaigning issue. The Government has sought ways to coordinate and increase the provision of early education and care, and to improve its quality. It has taken these steps for three reasons: to improve educational attainment; to help parents of young children into employment, especially single mothers in receipt of state benefits; and in order to combat child poverty. Provision has substantially increased, although the biggest percentage increase has been in the development of the for-profit (private) sector, which was previously very small.

Despite their new prominence, developments in services have been erratic. There have been many new initiatives superseding one another, and various changes in strategy. Costs have also risen substantially during this period, and the

sustainability of provision is threatened by high staff turnover. There have been a number of major reviews of UK policy and provision of early education and care in the last few years (OECD Country Note, 1999; Inter-departmental Review, 2002; Every Child Matters, 2004; National Audit Office, 2004), which have documented these changes.

Supply and Access

There are 2.9 million children in England below the compulsory school age of 5. (Children usually start primary school in the year in which they are 5). Different types of provision are available and/or most commonly used for different age groups. Typically a child will have two or three (or more) experiences of care and education arrangements before starting school at 4 years. These are summarized in the table below:

<i>Age of child</i>	<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Hours provided</i>	<i>Cost and subsidy if available</i>
0- to 2-year-olds	For-profit day nursery;	Full time/flexible	Av cost £150-200 per wk.
	Childminder	Full time/flexible	Tax credit if parental income below £58,000.
	Nanny (in house care)	Full time/flexible	Ditto
	Relative care	Full time/flexible	Ditto
	Sure Start or Children's Centre if available	Full time/flexible	None
			Variable
3-year-olds	As above	As above	As above
	Preschool	10-15hrs per wk	Small fee
	(playgroup)	12-15 hrs per wk	Free
	Nursery class	12-15 hrs per wk	Free
4-year-olds	Nursery school		
	As above Reception class in primary school	As above 25 hours per wk	As above Free

Children from ethnic minorities, especially those whose home language is not English, and children with disabilities, are less likely to access early years provision than other children (National Audit Office, 2004). Most 4-year-olds are in reception classes in primary school. This means that if their parents are working, they will have to make additional arrangements for their children for out-of-school hours, often at considerable inconvenience. Many for-profit and nonprofit organizations offer out-of-school supplementary care, either on school grounds or in separate facilities. Out-of-school provision has grown rapidly, but it is also the least stable form of provision, with a high turnover of providers, partly because expansion has been based on short-term start-up grants.

Registered child-care providers and places in England: December 2004

	<i>Providers</i>	<i>Places</i>
Childminders	71,000	318,100
Full day care: (extended-day preschool groups and day nurseries)	12,000	507,700
Sessional care: (playgroups and private nursery schools)	10,500	256,300
Out-of-school day care: (including holiday schemes)	9,700	341,500
Creches	2,500	42,800
All types of provision	105,600	1,466,300

Source: Nursery & Childcare Market News, February 2005, Vol 3, Issue 8.

For profit and out of school provision has increased, but some kinds of provision have decreased. The biggest casualty has been nursery schools. Since the 1920s the United Kingdom has had an internationally admired tradition of free-standing nursery schools. In 1997, there were some 500 of these nursery schools. They offered free part-time or full-time (school year) places for children aged 3–4, and a curriculum, delivered by trained teachers, which valued free play and outside activities. (The regulations for child-care provision do not require outside playspace!) Under a separate initiative, now phased out, the best of these nursery schools were designated as “centres of early excellence,” and subsequently, under yet another short-lived initiative, as “neighbourhood nurseries.” But nursery schools, in their various guises, have proved too expensive to run, mainly because of their insistence on employing trained teachers led by head teachers. Nursery schools have either been closed, or have had to try to adapt, chameleon-like, into whichever government initiative currently offers funds. At the time of writing most of the remaining nursery schools which are able to do so are becoming children’s centers.

The other category of provider that has suffered has been childminding or family day care. Between 1999 and 2003, 188,000 new childminder places were created, but 193,000 closed. This is partly because of the very stringent inspection requirements under OfSTED and partly because of the lack of demand for childminding places compared with other forms of provision.

Organization and Coordination of Services

There have been a series of moves to streamline the administration of services, at national and local level. In 1997, provision was piecemeal. Education provision (free nursery schools and classes) was controlled by the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and provided on a discretionary basis. Welfare provision was regulated by the Department of Health (family day care, family centers, and various other types of nonprofit and for-profit care) under the terms of the 1989 Children Act. This Act specified staff child-ratios (a minimum of one adult to three children under two at all times), set safety requirements, and for the first time introduced guidance on equality issues.

In 1997, the Labour Government tasked the DfEE to extend free part-time nursery education to all 4-year-olds and for 3-year-olds with special needs. At the same time the Department of Health launched its National Childcare Strategy to increase child-care provision for working parents. The Childcare Strategy proposed tax credits for working parents, to try to enable low-income working parents to purchase child care in the for-profit sector. The Treasury developed a separate and unrelated antipoverty initiative, Sure Start, for children aged 0–3. This was intended to be a community-based initiative, spanning health, education, and social services, offering a range of home-visiting and center-based services for young children and their mothers in disadvantaged communities.

Some attempts were made to provide a coherent framework for these separate initiatives. The Government set up Early Years Development and Care Partnerships (EYDCPs), semivoluntary, semiautonomous, stakeholder organizations, to coordinate initiatives at a local level and to oversee the expansion of nursery education and child care. They received short-term funds for their work (at one point more than twenty-six different streams of funding!). In particular they were required to generate more for-profit child care through start-up grants, training, and business advice (Penn and Randall, 2005).

However, it became evident that many of the new initiatives were confusing and time-wasting. An interdepartmental report in 2002 recommended a “rebranding” and streamlining. The EYDCPs are being phased out in favor of direct local authority control. The “Sure Start” initiative, a central plank of the Government’s antipoverty strategy, is also now being phased out or transformed because of slow implementation, poor take-up, and disappointing results. Funding will go to 3,500 local authority regulated multipurpose “children’s centres” (subsuming all other service initiatives including Sure Start local programs) for the most disadvantaged communities. These centers, set to become on stream by 2012, are intended to provide integrated care, education, health, and family support services for children 0–5. At a national level, responsibility for *all* types of education and childcare provision (although not Health) has now been relocated in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). A Minister for Children was appointed in 2004, and a Children’s Commissioner in 2005.

Curriculum and Teacher Preparation

A common curriculum or “Foundation Stage” was introduced for all center-based care, including for-profit care. All regulatory and inspection activities were handed over to the national Education Inspectorate (OfSTED) although the actual inspection regimes for educational and child-care provision remain distinct (Penn, 2002). Training was also streamlined, and a minimum vocational qualification has been set for a proportion of staff in all center-based care.

Financing

In England, the Government spent £3.6 billion in 2002–2003, and has spent in total some £14 billion on early years services since 1998, mainly on early education rather than on childcare (National Audit Office, 2004).

Despite these well-meaning initiatives, and the considerable amount of money spent, early education and care in the United Kingdom is still piecemeal. It has not reached the levels of provision of most European countries, despite pressure from within the EU (European Childcare Network 1997) and from the OECD (2001). The children's center program is a belated attempt to redress the situation, but many problems remain. A key issue is whether the demand for universal, equitable services can ever be addressed within a market led system.

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Helen Penn

Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights

Four interwoven strands in policy and thinking together make UK ideas about children and childhood distinctive. First, the United Kingdom is a wealthy country, but it has very high rates of poverty; when the Conservative party left power in 1997, their social policies ensured that one-third of children lived in poverty, and lone mothers and children were especially affected. The current New Labour government aims to reduce the proportion of children in poverty, and a principal method is to encourage mothers into paid work. Though early childhood services have expanded to meet this policy, in both quality and quantity they are inadequate.

Second, during the 1980s and 1990s, in explanation of high rates of poverty, politicians and right-wing media encouraged a culture of victim blaming, in which parents were blamed for children's failings. Children were described both as vulnerable to abuse by adults and as threats to the social order. These ideas persist today.

Third, as compared to other northern European countries, the United Kingdom has traditionally heavily emphasized parental responsibility for children's welfare and socialization, with the state playing a relatively minor role. Fourth, a linked point, there is general acceptance of the view that childhood is a presocial period; children are socialization projects for adults, especially for parents and, later on, early years preschool and school staff. Children are not generally recognized as citizens. Instead they are seen through "welfarist" spectacles as incomplete beings with a complex array of needs, whose welfare depends crucially on parental capacity and willingness to care.

The Rights of Children

Given this social context, the last fifteen years have seen increasing attempts to redress the balance, to do justice to children (and their parents), to rethink childhood: to think of children as people, as citizens who participate in social life. The 1989 UN **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC) was ratified by the UK government in 1991, but not incorporated into UK law. Essentially the CRC lays out children's rights as citizens, under three main headings: rights to protection (since they are a minority social group in the power of adults); rights to provision (since as weaker than adults they cannot provide for themselves); and rights to participate in decision making on matters that affect them.

The UK government has found protection and provision rights readily acceptable, since they fit with a welfarist model of services and with children as a complex of needs. But within a strongly patriarchal society, governments and other policymakers have found participation rights more difficult to accept. However, the importance of listening to children and taking account of their knowledge and experience has been demonstrated through many research studies, including work with some of the youngest children, in early years settings. Government policy documents now acknowledge that children have the right to be consulted on a wide range of topics that affect their lives. But thoroughgoing reforms to procedures for planning and implementation are still needed to ensure children's voices are seriously attended to.

Childhood as Socially Constructed

In addition to moves toward listening to children, there has been increased interest in the idea that childhood is socially constructed. Sociologists, historians, and anthropologists have provided masses of evidence that adults define childhood, and the children who inhabit childhood do so differently in differing times and places. This idea leads on to critiques of the ways in which childhood is commonly presented. Thus UK commentators note that the media and also policy documents commonly present deficit models of children—emphasizing what they lack rather than their strengths. Children are routinely described as incompetent, vulnerable, ignorant, and needy; whilst an alternative set of words might be competent, strong and resilient, knowledgeable and capable. An important part of the social constructionist approach is that it draws attention to ways in which childhood relates to adulthood. Thus if adults define children as incompetent (and so on), then adults will feel bound to protect and provide for children in order to meet and remedy these defects. If children are vulnerable, then mothers must be extra vigilant. Early childhood services in the United Kingdom have long been affected by the concept of children's needs, and also by the idea that an important part of the role of staff is to compensate for parental failures in socializing their children.

However, there is general agreement that ideas about childhood and indeed services for children are changing. The CRC has been important, with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as Save the Children taking up a principled stance for children's rights. Also important are changes in early childhood courses

and the huge increase in university childhood courses, drawing on anthropology and sociology. Although some of these courses still also draw on developmental psychology, they have built on and developed the work about listening to children, and further explored the social construction of childhood. The children's rights movement has brought strength to consideration of children's interests. The Open University BA in Childhood is already reaching out to thousands of students. These new strands in thinking are leading to debate on questions about the institutionalization of young children in nurseries (in the interests of decreasing family poverty) and about the character and quality of services for young children, and the appropriate training of those who work alongside them.

Deficit Models and Alternatives

However, the distinctive character of UK ideas about children makes it hard to obtain clear recognition of children as citizens with rights. Deficit models still prevail, rather than an understanding that children are not presocial recipients of adult socialization efforts. Sociologists concerned with childhood are attempting to move to a more structural understanding of childhood and to view children as constituting a social group that contributes through their labor to the maintenance and advancement of society. Just as in the past children used to work alongside adults in households, fields, and factories, so now their principal contributions are at school and at home. It is argued that children should be regarded not as objects of the education system, but as workers, who use their brains, bodies, and feelings to acquire knowledge and to help other children to do so. Staff in education settings should therefore think of their work as a partnership with children. This is probably easier for staff working with the youngest children, than for those gripped by the stringencies of the National Curriculum (see Curriculum entry, below)

At home, as every mother knows, children are not just the recipients of protection and provision; they are active participants in maintaining the household as a going concern. They engage in household work from their earliest months, they build and develop relationships; they comfort tired mothers and help their younger and elder siblings. In other words, they engage in people-work. One of the barriers to recognition of children's economic and social contributions is the long tradition whereby education staff define themselves as in authority over children; another is that children's people-work takes place mostly in private. It is only visible to another minority social group—women, and not to those who hold the power to change ideas about childhood.

Nevertheless, there are indications that policymakers on schooling are beginning to recognize that only if children actively participate in and engage with learning will they learn. The notion that children should enjoy learning is creeping back into policy statements. Some of this thinking may be a reaction to the straitjacket of top-down curricula and testing imposed from the 1990s onward. The new local authority controlled "children's centers" appear to emphasize a greater prominence for children's participation as key to good services. Perhaps the influence of such ideas will move upward through the school system?

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Berry Mayall

Culture, Race, and Ethnicity

Introduction

The United Kingdom has been a country of **immigration** and refuge for many years. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, the number of immigrants grew substantially, particularly from the countries of the New Commonwealth. The range of countries of origin and languages spoken broadened considerably in the 1990s due to refugees arriving from new conflict zones, economic migration, and the enlargement of the European Union. Current statistics show that currently 10 percent of all school pupils in England originate from black and ethnic minority communities. However this population is very unevenly distributed throughout the country, with the greatest concentrations in the major industrial cities and London in particular. It is currently estimated that 300 languages are spoken in the greater London area by school children.

Definitions

Providing definitions of terms such as "multiculturalism," "race," "ethnicity," or "identity" in the UK context is a challenge. There is little consensus and debate is lively. The Runnymede Trust, in a report on the future of multiethnic Britain, defined a broad concept of multiculturalism based on social justice for individuals. It also recognized that, as individual citizens belong to particular religious, ethnic, cultural, and regional communities, account has to be taken of these differences and affiliations if genuine equal treatment of citizens is to be achieved.

However, multiculturalism, by encouraging the concept of multiple and developing identities, has also been considered to be a divisive force in society. This concern rose to the surface in the aftermath of community unrest in the north of England in 2001 and the terrorist bombings in London in 2005 and led to calls for "integration" to replace multiculturalism and for the development of a concept of Britishness.

Developments in Policy

In the 1960s, as families with young children who did not speak English arrived to join working fathers in the major industrial cities, they posed a problem for an education system which was totally unprepared to receive them. Educational

policies since that time have shifted between advocating integration, multiculturalism, equal opportunity and antiracist approaches, or indeed ignoring the issues altogether.

In 1966, the Home Office allocated funds to local authorities in areas where substantial numbers of new immigrants had settled to support any additional expenditure they may incur, in particular the cost of teaching English. The goal was assimilation. Children were initially taught in reception centres or in withdrawal units attached to mainstream schools. The expectation was that new immigrants would learn English and assimilate culturally into the mainstream society. Little interest was expressed in the children's cultural experiences and deficit models of bilingualism were common and teacher expectations low.

The concept of multicultural education developed in recognition that the school population in major urban areas had changed and that diversity of culture and language was an asset that needed to be recognized and valued to ensure equal educational opportunity. The Swann report, a major investigation into the education of children from minority ethnic communities, advocated a multicultural education for all children. It also reported on the effects of racism on black pupils and recommended that all pupils be taught in mainstream classrooms and have full access to the whole curriculum. The report was much debated but generally sidelined as the Education Reform Act of 1988 initiated government control of the school curriculum: the National Curriculum was statutory, assimilationist in its philosophy and eurocentric in its content. It was also overloaded, leaving little opportunity for teachers to work beyond it.

The new Labour Government of 1997 expressed a commitment to the development of early years education and childcare and to improving equality of opportunity for all children. The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000) acknowledged the different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds of children. Practitioners were expected to provide appropriate resources and encourage use of home languages.

Following the McPherson report of 1999 into the racist murder of a black teenager, which mobilized public opinion on the issue of institutional racism, the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) gave institutions a duty to eliminate discrimination through auditing their practices and outcomes in all areas of their work. Educational institutions were required by law to have a Race Equality Policy and an action plan for implementation.

The Experience of Young Children in the Classroom

Multicultural education at its best in early years settings incorporates elements from the cultures of all pupils into the every day practice of the school. Teachers understand the benefits of bilingualism and seek staff who speak the children's home languages. They build partnerships with parents and communities and draw on their cultural expertise and community knowledge to incorporate language, cultural and religious events, and creative arts into the curriculum. The whole environment of the school, the displays, the books, the resources (utensils, dressing up clothes, dolls, food) reflect the home experiences of the children. Early years settings rise to the challenge of reflecting the very many different cultures

that can be represented in one place. While acknowledging the importance of reflecting the experience of children in a particular setting, many educators feel that all children, especially in areas of low diversity, should experience different cultures on their way to becoming global citizens.

However, multicultural education has made little impact on the curriculum of schools. It does not generally address issues of economic and political power and their impact on the lives of children from black and ethnic minority communities. Neither has it had any significant impact on children's achievement in school.

The concept of antiracist education developed in response to the growing evidence of discrimination and the devastating effect this has on the lives and educational opportunities of children.

A curriculum for racial equality focuses on issues of social justice and combating racism. In the early years it recognizes that children learn their attitudes to race and social hierarchies from the environment and the adults around them at a very early age. Young children's experiences of racism (through name calling, ridicule, social rejection, etc.) seriously damage their self-esteem, their sense of personal identity and their educational achievement. An effective setting is a safe place for young children in which they learn to value differences, respect their peers, learn to be confident about themselves, and collaborate with others. It is a setting in which all staff, in partnership with families and communities, address negative behavior and support children who have suffered from racism.

Organizations such as the Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network have produced detailed guidance on these issues (EYTARN, 1998), as has the Commission for Racial Equality in relation to auditing equal opportunities in schools (CRE, 2000).

Issues in Practice

While good practice exists in relation to educating young children to value cultural differences, to respect others, and to develop a strong and confident sense of personal identity, this practice is not supported by a concept of entitlement and is a long way from being universal. The lack of consensus in relation to issues of culture, race, and ethnicity means that policy can change its focus as attitudes swing, governments change, politicians respond to shifts in public opinion, sometimes fuelled by sensational and negative press campaigns.

Government legislation since 2000 and the restructuring of services for young children have focused on quantifiable aspects of equal opportunities. Schools and early years settings are required to have policies and action plans, to analyze test results by ethnicity, to seek solutions to the underachievement of identified groups, some of which has been persistent and well documented for over thirty years.

Policies can be written and statistics collected. The skilled and sensitive practice required to translate equal opportunities into meaningful educational experiences for young children requires equally sensitive and skilled teacher education. New teachers feel they have been very poorly prepared to work with children from a range of cultural backgrounds (NQT survey) and there is a shortage of courses for experienced teachers in these issues.

In the absence of a consensus, how issues of social justice, racism, cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity are addressed in practice in the classroom is often down to enthusiastic individuals who make full use of the legislative and policy framework, but go far beyond it in a commitment to developing the best practice for the young children in their care and organizing to influence policy. The extent to which educational experience is tailored to the cultural traditions of children and their families still varies greatly at the time of writing.

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Raymonde Sneddon

Poverty

In the middle of the 90s, Britain ranked third from the bottom in an international comparison of relative child poverty rates in rich countries (UNICEF, 2000). Up to 1997 it also had the worst EU rates. Indeed, during the twentieth century's last decade, child poverty had become widespread, as demonstrated by the following excerpt from a major survey of children's access to necessities (Gordon, Adelman, Ashworth et al., 2000):

A third of British children go without at least one of the things they need, like three meals a day, toys, out of school activities or adequate clothing. Eighteen percent of children go without two or more items defined as necessities by the majority of the population.

After the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, Britain and 116 other countries agreed to adopt a two-tier approach to the measure of "absolute" and "overall," or "relative," poverty. They agreed to try to eradicate the former and reduce the latter. Relative poverty relates (a) to lack of access to basics and (b) to participation in decision making and in civil, social, and cultural life. The term "social exclusion" is generally used to refer to the second component of this poverty definition.

In accordance with European practice, the relative poverty line was set at 60 percent of median income level, that is, after deduction of taxes and benefits

and adjusted for household size. The Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey (Gordon, Adelman, Ashworth et al., 2000) explored necessities deprivation and the distribution of poverty across households and argued for a long-term measure of poverty focusing on living standards, to provide a more comprehensive picture of the effects of poverty.

Child poverty was found disproportionately in minority ethnic families, in large and lone parent families, in families with younger children, in families in the social rented housing sector, and where families with children included a disabled member. General poverty in the United Kingdom, compared to that in other OECD countries, was also characterized by persistent, rather than transient poverty rates, high rates of workless households with children, of low-pay households and of low-employment levels and rates of pay among lone parent households, all factors with a direct bearing on children's life chances. Incontrovertible evidence confirms poverty's effect on children's present quality of life and later development.

When the Labour Government took office in 1997, these emerging general and child poverty data, coupled with Britain's ranking in terms of relative poverty among industrialized nations, caused official concern. While recognizing the complex and multidimensional nature of child poverty within robust economies, the UK government decided that tackling child poverty should be a key policy goal. In 1999, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced the government's intention to eradicate child poverty within a generation, that is, by 2020, and to halve it by 2010.

This announcement placed children center stage in the government's antipoverty strategy. Policies included the introduction of a minimum wage, increased child benefit packages and tax credit reforms, including the introduction of a child tax credit. The annual *Opportunity for All* surveys were established as a mechanism for monitoring general and child poverty levels. A Minister for Children was created in 2003, and Children's Commissioners were appointed in Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and England in 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005 respectively.

The main focus of the new antipoverty measures was firmly on the under fives and their families. The "Welfare to Work" principle constituted the foundation for the Government's antipoverty strategy and was translated into the 1998 *National Childcare Strategy*, reformatted in 2004 as the *Ten Year Strategy for Childcare*. Its aim was to encourage a mixed market of child-care provision to support maternal employment, in particular the return to work of 70 percent of lone mothers by 2010.

The aim of improving long-term educational attainment, and hence a more highly skilled workforce, underpinned the provision of universal part-time free early years education for all 3- and 4-year-olds, a target achieved by 2004.

In addition, the government chose to address child poverty with targeted area-based initiatives such as *Education and Health Action Zones*, *New Deal for Communities* and an expensive, multiagency family support program *Sure Start* for under threes and their families. Yet the Government's own statistics confirmed that targeted policies would miss out many children, by showing that half of poor children lived outside geographically disadvantaged areas.

As far as poverty in early childhood was concerned, it soon became obvious that there were significant interface problems between the supply side subsidy provided to providers of early education, and the demand side subsidies provided to parents in the form of child-care tax credits, which was meant to encourage the operation of the child-care market. There simply was not enough money in the system to ensure day care growth, sustainability, and accessibility to poor children.

This “market failure” was behind the government’s 2004 changes to the child-care strategy, including an increase in child-care tax credits limits and women’s entitlement to a full-year paid maternity leave by the end of the present parliament. No robust measures were announced to encourage universal child-care provision for 1- and 2-year-olds. The reformatted child-care strategy was to continue its heavy reliance on market mechanisms for its success.

The Sure Start programs, originally the lynchpin of the antipoverty strategy, were integrated with a range of other center-based family support initiatives into a nationwide program of children’s centers. By 2010 there should be 3,500 of these “in every community,” offering access to integrated early years activities, child-care and family services, including some health services. As far as measuring the impact on child poverty of the government’s early years strategies is concerned, the Sure Start initiative is subject to an extensive national evaluation. However, this has so far yielded few significant findings.

The government does appear to have achieved its main target for 2004, namely lifting some 700,000 children out of poverty since the late 1990s. But while gains have been made, some key indicators pertinent to child poverty have worsened significantly since the late 90s, including a doubling of the number of households with children in temporary accommodation. Gender, ethnicity, and disability continue to characterize child poverty in Britain and gains made in terms of children’s healthy development and later life chances remain at risk.

The evidence justifies the conclusion that even under conditions of full employment, child poverty will not simply disappear, as low pay remains a significant problem. Investing in early education and care cannot on its own address child poverty significantly. Two parents in paid employment may be sufficient to keep a household with a couple of children above the poverty threshold, but lower levels of parental employment provide no guarantees in this respect. In an era that has witnessed the disappearance of the family wage, an over-reliance on paid work as a route out of poverty for households with children, and a rigid adherence to the “welfare to work” principle, may eventually prove counterproductive in achieving the Labour Government’s aim of eradicating child poverty within a generation.

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Eva Lloyd

The Concept of Quality in the United Kingdom

“Quality” is a central concern for policy and research in early childhood education and care in the United Kingdom. It is seen by government to be a necessary condition to reduce the possibility of bad effects of attending child care and to ensure the best outcomes. In its recent *Ten Year Strategy for Child Care* document, the UK government speaks of its vision of a child care system where “child care services are among the best in the world; and all families are able to afford high quality child care services.” Ensuring that “pre-school child care is of high quality will improve outcomes for children, particularly the youngest children, as well as creating wider benefits for families and society.” It bases this statement on research interpreted as showing that “quality pre-school experiences can have clear positive effects on children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development . . . [and that] early exposure to quality pre-school is more effective . . . the higher the quality of the education provided.”

Recent research in the United Kingdom has been dominated by two large-scale government-funded longitudinal studies, one focused on the Labour Government’s flagship Sure Start program, which targets young children and families in poor areas; the other examining the consequences of attendance at different forms of provision—*The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education* (EPPE). Much quoted by government, EPPE concludes that “high quality provision” has a positive effect on children’s intellectual and social/behavioral development: the better the quality, the better for the children’s development. Quality has been assessed using a standardized rating scale based on the Early Childhood **Environmental Rating Scale**, developed by Clifford and Harms in the United States.

The EPPE researchers further conclude that quality is associated with various staffing features, including staff with higher qualifications, leadership skills,

and longer years of service: “having qualified trained teachers working with children . . . had the greatest impact on quality, and was linked specifically with better outcomes in pre-reading and social development” (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons et al., 2003, p. 2). In other words, structure (in particular staffing) and process (the environment of the service) are presented as closely connected. At the same time, in policy statements, government distinguishes access from quality, but presents them both as necessary and complementary goals.

However, given current policies it is difficult for government to meet these goals. A great part of early childhood services, those referred to as “child care,” are delivered by private providers (mostly businesses) in a private market, and parents are expected to pay for these services as consumers needing to purchase “child care.” Public funding is focused on parents unable to access the market because of low income, through targeted policies, in particular tax credits. Most of the costs of these child care services are, therefore, carried by parents, and this funding base has proved incompatible with developing a well-qualified workforce; levels of qualification are low, as are pay and related conditions.

Even within its own terms, government policy faces a contradiction: how to achieve “quality” in a market system. It faces a further problem. Parents as consumers may be unable to afford the conditions for good quality but they are also thought to lack the necessary knowledge to make informed choices: in the words of a government Treasury report, “although the quality of child care experience is vital to child outcomes, there is evidence to suggest that parents do not accurately observe the quality of the child care they use.”

This discussion on quality in the United Kingdom today forms part of a wider discourse on quality, with its origins in the United States in the 1980s. The United States is seen as a reference point by UK policymakers and researchers, who draw heavily on the disciplinary perspectives, methods, and results of American research. The observation by Bloch (1992) about the United States could apply equally to the United Kingdom, at least when it comes to government-funded research: “early childhood educators who fail to frame their research or research methods in the largely positivist traditions and theories of child development or developmental psychology find themselves marginalized.”

As part of the wider Anglo-American discourse about early childhood, the discussion and practice of quality in the United Kingdom is inscribed with the values and assumptions of liberalism and modernity. Quality is understood in terms of identifying and assuring certain conditions that will promote particular results or outcomes, usually defined in developmental terms. As such, it is a normative concept. It assumes the possibility of identifying stable, objective, decontextualized, and therefore generalizable criteria or norms, against which a service can be assessed: in a nutshell, quality is about conformity to norms. Moreover, the outcomes which quality is intended to promote are also normative, in the form, for example, of developmental or educational standards, and being normative they are also predetermined; quality, therefore, promotes and values an environment that ensures predictability.

This approach has been subject to some criticism, which has extended to problematising the concept of quality, and its attendant values and assumptions, and seeking an alternative approach to evaluation. During the 1990s, among

some UK and other European researchers there was a growing awareness of the importance of, and impossibility of avoiding, context, complexity, plurality, and subjectivity. Attention was paid to the process of defining quality and to how that process might be made more inclusionary and participatory, involving a wide range of stakeholders. This introduced the possibility of multiple perspectives or understandings of what quality is, and that quality might be subjective, value-based, relative and dynamic, never reaching a final and objective statement. In its ground-breaking proposals for “quality targets in services for young children,” the European Commission Child Care Network (1995), an expert group drawn from the then 12 member states of the European Union, summed up the search for a new approach to quality when it concluded that “quality is a relative concept based on values and beliefs, and defining quality should be a dynamic, continuous and democratic process.” Further, it argued that “defining quality is a process . . . [which] should be participatory and democratic, involving different groups including children, parents and families and professionals working in services . . . [T]he needs, perspectives and values of these groups may sometimes differ.” By adopting this approach, the Child Care Network implied that quality was as much a political as a technical issue, and a matter for citizens as much as experts.

It would be misleading to suggest that this approach to quality, or indeed other work which has questioned the very concept of quality and suggested that there are other concepts for evaluating early childhood services, has gained widespread currency in the United Kingdom. These are marginalized perspectives. The discussion—in government, services and research—remains dominated by a model of quality as conformity to expert-defined and neutral norms, a statement of fact rather than a judgement of value, and a way of coping with the complexities and uncertainties of the modern world. This model is accompanied by a prescriptive, centralized, and normative system of regulation of early childhood services, including national service standards, a detailed curriculum framework, early learning goals and a national system of inspection by a powerful agency (OfSTED), which originally covered schools and has now had its responsibility extended to cover early childhood services and, indeed, all other services for children. The chapter on “building quality” in the latest government policy statement focuses on two broad areas: improvements to the workforce and “a reformed regulatory framework and inspection system.”

In this respect, early childhood services in the United Kingdom can be summed as a “quasi-market and an evaluative state,” with a strong public rhetoric of choice and diversity combined with the actuality of a centrally regulated system.

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Peter Moss

The Early Years Curriculum—United Kingdom

Introduction

The United Kingdom is made up of four distinct countries, each of which has jurisdiction over education: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Though broadly similar, there are also some significant differences. In Wales, for example, the Early Years curriculum has taken shape in the form of the *Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning*, which serves as a national guide for the Early Years. The Welsh educational model is also distinctive in its Welsh language policy, where Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum.

In England, most children enter primary school in the year in which they become 5 years old, either in nursery classes attached to primary school, or in the reception class. Children are taught the National Curriculum, which is based on a combination of subject divisions, learning stages, and attainment levels. Children's ability to meet the levels of attainment specified in the curriculum is monitored by national testing procedures in the form of Standard Attainment Tests (SATs). The SATs focused on attainments in reading, writing, and mathematics and the results of SATs are aggregated for all schools and presented in the form of league tables. Teachers in primary schools therefore face the pressure of teaching to these tests and keeping to a subject-based, direct teaching approach. In 1999, the National Literacy Strategy was introduced and in 2000, the Numeracy Strategy. These prescribed the content and duration (one hour) of special literacy and numeracy sessions for all pupils in state primary schools. They further reinforce the emphasis on a subject-based and target-oriented curriculum, despite the more holistic approaches to children under 5 years described below.

The English Curriculum: Birth to Three

As a precursor to the curriculum for 3- to 5-year-olds, the Government also introduced a curriculum model for under threes. This curriculum is intended as guidance for all those working with young children, in whatever type of provision is locally available.

The *Birth to 3 Matters* Framework (2003) consists of four aspects: a strong child, a skillful communicator, a competent learner, and a healthy child. The main aim of the Framework is to provide support and guidance for all those involved in the care and education of babies and children from birth to three years. The Framework "recognizes that all children from birth have a need to develop, learning through interaction with people and exploration of the world around them" and acknowledges the "individuality, efforts and achievements" of children. Indeed, the Framework emphasizes the child as an individual and makes

a concerted effort to steer clear of subject divisions and curriculum headings. The Framework focuses on the skills and competences of the child.

The table below illustrates the four aspects and components of the Framework:

<i>Aspects</i>	<i>Components</i>			
<i>A strong child</i>	Me, myself and I	Being acknowledged and affirmed	Developing self-assurance	A sense of belonging
<i>A skillful communicator</i>	Being together	Finding a voice	Listening and responding	Making meaning
<i>A competent learner</i>	Making connections	Being imaginative	Being creative	Representing
<i>A healthy child</i>	Emotional well-being	Growing and developing	Keeping safe	Health choices

The English Curriculum: Foundation Stage

As part of a more general reorganization of early education and care, the government has made provision for all 3- and 4-year-old children to receive state-funded (but not necessarily state provided) part-time early education with a good quality curriculum.

The foundation stage. In September 2000, the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* for children aged 3–5 was launched by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England. The *Guidance* generally advocates the need for a holistic curriculum that takes into consideration the needs of the individual child and encourages children to be active learners. In contradistinction to the National Curriculum, the *Guidance* proposes Early Learning Goals (ELGs), as follows:

- Personal, social, and emotional development
- Communication, language, and literacy
- Mathematical development
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

The metaphor of “stepping stones” is used for each learning goal to describe a range of learning experiences, which all children need in order to achieve the ELGs. So for instance, within the area of “Personal, social and emotional development,” the stepping stones include “show curiosity,” “have a strong exploratory impulse,” and “have a positive approach to new experiences.” These “stepping stones” chart the progress of the children toward the ELGs and help to identify the kinds of knowledge and skills that children should have by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The six principles. Accompanying the ELGs is also a set of six principles that underpin the *Guidance*. These principles stress the importance of meeting the needs of children, the role of parents as partners, and the importance of play as a tool for learning. The six principles encompass the following:

- Putting the principles into practice
- Meeting the diverse needs of children
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Children with English as an additional language
- Learning and teaching
- Play

The main purpose of the principles is to guide practitioners to assess and to plan for the children in their settings, and to ensure that all children are given an equal opportunity to develop and progress during the foundation stage. In the guidance notes for practitioners, the principles are also promoted through examples from real life settings and recommendations for practitioners.

Teacher observation and assessment. In an attempt to chart the progress of the children through the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is also accompanied by a handbook of assessment tools for practitioners, entitled the *Foundation Stage Profile*. The aim of the *Profile*, as the introduction states, is to provide a form of evidence-based report for parents of their child's development, and "for information to be passed on to the child's next teacher." The handbook is very much built on the use of observations as a tool for assessing and monitoring children's learning and development. It involves the practitioner carrying out regular observations on each child, and accumulating a record of the child's progress within the six areas of learning. In addition, embedded within the *Profile* are assessment scales, where the six areas of learning are matched against a set of 13 assessment scales, each of which has 9 points. So for instance, in the area of "Personal, social and emotional development," three of the points include, "shows an interest in classroom activities through observation or participation," "dresses, undresses and manages own personal hygiene with adult support" and "displays high levels of involvement in self-chosen activities." The practitioner records each point that the child achieves in each scale and collates it in the form of a Foundation Stage Profile booklet.

However, the introduction of the *Foundation Stage Profile* raises pertinent questions about the role of assessment, especially for this age group. The use of assessment scales and a system of points serve to drive the curriculum toward an outcome-driven and assessment-led approach, even as both the principles of the *Profile* and *Foundation Stage Guidance* claim to achieve the contrary. The assessment scales reinforce the "downward pressure" on Early Years settings to adhere to a "tick-chart" list of developmental achievement and render the curriculum more formal. The ambiguity in the descriptions of some of the assessment points also makes it difficult to quantify or qualify the achievements of the child. The progress and development of children are often uneven, as they do not fit neatly into separate compartments nor can they be checked against a definitive list of points.

The *Guidance* was developed in response to lobbying from practitioners for a less formal approach to learning and to some extent it has addressed some of those concerns. Prior to the *Foundation Stage Guidance*, there was no formal recognition of the value of play for this stage of learning, and this was in part due to the content-driven National Curriculum.

Curriculum philosophy. The underpinning philosophy and values of the *Guidance* are rooted in the notion that all children are entitled to a curriculum that reflects the needs of each child. However, while the introduction of the *curriculum* can be seen as a step forward in bringing about a legislated curriculum, it remains to be seen how its implementation impacts on teaching and learning within Early Years settings. Much has been left to the intuition and professionalism of practitioners to make sense of the document, and to make sense of the transition between the two age groups: between the *Birth to 3 Matters* Framework and the *Foundation Stage Guidance*. Especially with the latter, the challenge that practitioners face is to put the curriculum into practice. Ultimately, the true strength of the curriculum lies in the hands of the practitioner; in the appropriateness of her training and in her ability to make sense of the curriculum, and implement it in a way that also reflects the child's social and cultural context. In this light, it remains to be seen if the *Guidance* lives up to expectations, in realizing the more liberal vision of policy makers and professionals concerned with early years, and in meeting the aspirations of parents and practitioners.

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Lynn Ang

Early Childhood Services and Children Under Three in the United Kingdom

Introduction

Early years policy concerning children under the age of 3 in the United Kingdom has turned 180 degrees in the last sixty years. In post war Britain, the Government and leading advocacy groups were unequivocal in their advice to mothers of children under the age of 2 that they should stay at home. Now, there is exhortation backed by some financial assistance to support parents' participation in the labor market.

In particular, the Labour Government, over two terms from 1997 to 2004, has introduced policies on the under threes which are based on the assumption that the first 36 months of life represent a critical opportunity in which to address the roots of lifelong disadvantage and inequality. In making this shift, the Government has drawn heavily on the American longitudinal research, especially the Perry High Scope study. Policy development for the youngest children has also been

reinforced by emerging evidence from neuroscience, although the interpretation of this as meaning the first thirty-six months are an exclusively critical period has been disputed.

Policy

Compared to the long period of public policy neglect of the under threes, policy development in the last ten years has been dramatic and in three directions. The first of these is a major emphasis on compensatory intervention aimed at reducing disadvantage, through a program known as Sure Start. Sure Start initially prioritized families with children under the age of 4 in the 20 percent most disadvantaged wards (administrative districts). It focused funding on the development of services with a broad range of social and health intended outcomes. For example, it developed services to reduce the rates of smoking to improve birth weights and increase the rates of breast-feeding. However, while one of the goals of Sure Start is to help counter poverty, it has been estimated that even extending the program to 30 percent of the most disadvantaged wards would still leave 30 percent of the poorest children unreached.

The second policy goal has been to improve the quality and availability of nursery provision in order to improve educational outcomes for all children, including the under threes. The main approach here was the generous funding of a national network of nurseries (Centres of Early Excellence), designated on the basis of their capacity to work with children from three months and their families. In addition to the “excellence” of their educational provision, these centers have been expected to demonstrate how social (family support and child care for working parents) and educational provision can be integrated. Centres of Early Excellence also had a “beacon role” and they were intended to act as models of good practice for other local providers. However, both these and Sure Start Centres are being phased out or “rebranded” in favor of new, amalgamated “Children’s Centres,” which offer wider coverage, but which provide less per capita funds. The most recent proposal is the establishment of 3500 Children’s Centres by 2010.

Funding

There has been a major push, primarily through economic incentives to the private sector and tax credits to parents, to expand the number of child care places for under threes for working parents. This has been almost entirely taken up by middle income rather than low-income families, as intended (see Finance entry, below). This primarily market driven approach to provision through demand side funding (money given to parents rather than directly to services) means that there is a continual sharp pressure to drive nursery costs down (meaning a poorly paid, poorly qualified, and high-turnover workforce) while actual nursery fees for working parents are disproportionately high in relation to most incomes.

This mixed economy of private and public provision, while being seen politically as the fastest route to expansion of places and reductions in inequality,

has generated its own tensions and inequalities. Until 1990, early years services in practice meant mainly part time nursery education for 3- and 4-year-olds. Despite the rapid developments in policy to enable under threes to “catch up,” in many respects, the “bolting on” of services for children under three to historically well-established educational provision for 3- and 4-year-olds has led to major philosophical and organizational tensions.

Training and Quality of Care

Organizational tensions have included the inevitable difficulties of bringing together the different professional groups that have been involved in the care and education of young children, mainly nursery nurses and nursery teachers. These groups have very different trainings, pay, conditions of service and status. Historically, they have been subject to different inspection arrangements, the former to do mostly with health and safety issues and the latter with a mainly education remit. This has been an issue for the whole early years workforce. However, for under threes, the workforce has been largely drawn from nursery nurses who have had a basic vocational training.

The Government, anxious to promote educational outcomes, has insisted that senior posts in the new government-funded Children’s Centres will only go to those with qualified teacher status or with a postgraduate qualification. All regulatory and inspection functions (compulsory for all education and childcare premises in the United Kingdom) have been reallocated into a single inspection service within OfSTED, the education inspectorate agency. These changes in provision, promotion opportunities, training, regulation and inspection have left nursery nurses, who despite their basic training were likely to have more expertise with children under three, often feeling marginalized and devalued. Services for children under three run the risk of being conceptualized as merely an extension of nursery education for 3- and four-year-olds, while early years services in general are conceptualized as merely an extension of statutory schooling (see the Early Years Curriculum—United Kingdom entry).

A further major difficulty is that as the under threes sector has rapidly expanded, workforce development has struggled to keep up. Half the workforce is unqualified and the remainder often qualified to a relatively low level, certainly not graduate level. Mindful of this, the Government commissioned the development of materials (The Birth to Three Matters Framework) to support those working with under threes. However, given the highly diverse experience and training of the workforce, this Framework has had to be pitched at a basic level. Further, its implementation is very much at the discretion of individual nurseries and opportunities for working with it are highly varied.

Philosophical Divide

At a deeper level than these important organizational issues, the expansion of provision for babies and under threes has raised philosophical questions about the upbringing of the youngest children. Some of this has been due to a deep-rooted national suspicion of any nonmaternal care of babies and very young children.

Anxiety about the adequacy of any provision for babies that is nonmaternal is a continuing theme in media debate.

This anxiety has been underpinned by emerging evidence from two major studies showing that high levels of poor quality group care before the age of 3 may be associated with increased levels of antisocial behavior or lower levels of emotional regulation by the age of 3. The required ratios for group care of under threes in the United Kingdom are much more generous than in most countries but politicians have again questioned whether there is enough consistency of adult attention in most nurseries to enable infants to establish effective emotional regulation.

Developments in national standards and the training of the under threes workforce have reflected some of these concerns. A central principle of the Birth to Three Framework has been the importance of consistency and sensitivity of care in staff interactions with babies and under threes. This has been provided through the role of the “key person,” a member of staff with responsibility for most of the day-to-day care of a small group of three or four children. Implementation of the key person role however is contentious and very variable. This is partly for organizational reasons—it very much reduces flexibility in the deployment of staff. However, it is also partly because the role places a particular emphasis on the importance of one to one relationships between infants and adults, to the detriment of other relationship opportunities in the nursery.

This issue is also evident in the National Standard, which has an additional Annex devoted to work with under twos. The tone of the standards is very much to emphasize the vulnerability of these youngest children and the importance of health and safety. Little is made of their resilience and the extended opportunities for interaction that care outside the home can provide.

Conclusion

At the close of the second Labour Government, provision in the United Kingdom for children under three has been the subject of major development. But it is development built on a number of major fault lines that continue to provoke contradictions and confusions.

The next phase of policy development will be shaped by a new Ten Year Child Care strategy. Almost certainly as a result of anxiety about the impact of nonparental care in the first 12 months, the strategy proposes an extension of parental leave to nine months (by April 2007) with the intention of a further extension to 12 months, to be shared by both parents, by 2010. However, it is doubtful if serious shifts in quality and accessibility can be achieved as long as philosophically there are basic, unresolved, conflicts of values.

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Peter Elfer

Inclusion

The Background to Current Legislation

The process toward a more inclusive education system for children with special educational needs began with Warnock's review of provision (1978). The major recommendation of the Warnock Report in the United Kingdom relates to the terminology used, and the underlying concepts implied by it. Using language such as "mentally handicapped" and "retarded" to classify children was identified as being within a medical deficit model framework. Thus, such language suggested that the "problem" was within the child rather than as a critique of the system or the type of provision on offer. This medical deficit terminology was therefore abandoned for the more generic term of "special educational need" (SEN).

However, even today, terminology still remains a contentious issue, with current critique concerning the concept of "special," "additional" and "need." Some conditions are themselves medically uncertain. For example, the diagnosis of "autistic spectrum disorder" is open to a wide variety of interpretations, and treatment might vary considerably. A further complication of terminology concerns the additional funding for provision or extra support often requested by parents or professionals working with children with special educational needs. The funding mechanism requires evidence of assessment that a special need exists and there is a perception that giving a child a specific label will ensure that funding follows. In addition, there are ambiguities within government legislation that aim to promote the notion of inclusion, while at the same time continuing to use terms rooted within the medical deficit model.

The Warnock Report was also significant because it recommended that professionals should work in partnership with parents; that there should be early identification of SEN; and that there should be an increase in working together in multidisciplinary teams. However, since the report was published the concept of partnership between parents and professionals and working together in multidisciplinary teams remains problematic, and its existence and its impact is difficult to

measure. There is little direct evidence that the injunction to work in partnership has had an impact in terms of quality and effective delivery of provision to meet the individual needs of children with special educational needs.

Warnock (1978) promoted the concept that “all children should be the responsibility of all teachers.” However, the recent appointment of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) to coordinate provision for children with special needs in schools suggests that responsibility for children with special educational needs is being viewed by other members of primary and secondary school staff as solely the responsibility of the SENCO.

Current UK Legislation

Current legislation in the United Kingdom regarding children with special educational needs (SEN) is arguably the most radical to date, and for the first time gives children with disabilities civil rights. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001, which came into effect in September 2002, embraces the full range of education provision, including early years settings, schools, and universities. This legislation begins with the premise that all children and young people will be placed in mainstream provision as opposed to a separate special school provision. Recent trends in England and Wales indicate a decrease in pupils being placed in special schools (Norwich, 2002). Over the past two decades, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have had their powers reduced by a raft of legislation, but they still retain responsibility for ensuring that education provision is made for children with special educational needs. In the light of the demands of SENDA, many LEAs are reviewing their special school provision. As a result, the future for special schools is currently uncertain. A further issue is that the language contained within the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 is, despite efforts at clarification, still problematic and likely to require legal challenge to establish what inclusion actually means.

Early Education and Care

Early years provision, compared to other sectors of education provision, has been a leading force in developing inclusive policies and in identifying areas of positive practice for children with special educational needs.

Guidance from the government for all early years settings in receipt of any Department for Education and Skills (DfES) direct or indirect funding requires that they have “regard to the Code of Practice” (2001) in the early identification of a special educational need. All early years providers are expected to have a written SEN policy and to identify a staff member as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Funding has been provided by the DfES for the professional development of SENCOs to ensure that national standards can be met. In the past, much of this funding has been targeted toward professional teachers working in primary and secondary schools. The training needs of those professionals have been largely determined on a local basis by the individual LEAs rather than as a systematic national program. This funding has now been extended to address the professional development of SENCOs in the early years

sector through a program of nationally recognized training for all practitioners working in the early years (DfES, 2004) There are concerns about the assumption that training and expertise from one sector of education can be easily transported to, or is desirable in another, that is, from primary or secondary schooling to early years care.

To provide effective early intervention strategies for children with special educational needs, the UK government is also promoting an integrated approach to children's services. Crucial to this is the concept of the multidisciplinary team of health, education, and social services providing "joined up" assessment procedures and shared access to the records. To accommodate this shared access, a common database has been developed so that professionals working with a child can now easily share information. It is envisaged that one professional in the team will be responsible for coordinating the team in their work with individual families. Parents will certainly welcome the reduction of what often amounts to duplication of information (Mittler, 2000) by the introduction of the named professional acting as a conduit for the multidisciplinary team as a whole. However, this "named person" role is problematic because of the status of the named professional within the multidisciplinary team and because of the lack of training available for that person to manage a complex "team" with frequently competing professional agendas, funding mechanisms, and time constraints. There is also a continuing debate in the United Kingdom regarding the nature of the use of databases and implications for civil liberties. This debate has yet to be resolved.

The move toward inclusive provision has cost implications that cannot be underestimated, both in terms of training professionals working with children with special educational needs in inclusive settings, and raising the professional status of practitioners working in the early years.

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Helen Masterton

Children's Health and Well-Being

Children who are emotionally and physically healthy have the energy and motivation to play, explore, experiment, learn, and form relationships with others. A healthy childhood is not only important in its own right, it also lays the foundations for health in adult life. The focus of UK health policy has recently begun to reflect the need to ensure children's emotional and social well-being alongside their physical health.

Article 24 of the United Nations **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (UNCRC 1989) details the child's right to health, beginning with the basic necessities of clean drinking water and adequate nutritious foods. Article 24 refers to the differing global expectations for children's health, stating in section one that the child has the right to the "highest attainable standard of health." The need to ensure children's physical survival has to date focused attention on children's physical health with much less attention being given to social and emotional health.

National Health Service in the United Kingdom provides free health care and prescriptions for all children, and has traditionally reflected the emphasis on physical well-being. The development of comprehensive immunization programs, welfare foods, and child health clinics is supported by the inspection of water, sanitation, food, hygiene etc. by a variety of government agencies. However, in stating that a child has a right to the highest attainable standard of health, the UNCRC has set aspirational goals for children's social and emotional well-being alongside their physical health. In the United Kingdom there are major health concerns about the large number of young children living in relative poverty, experiencing behavior difficulties or mental health problems and those eating nutritionally poor diets and taking little exercise. In addition, a recent well-publicized case, the tragic death of Victoria Climbié at the hands of her foster parents, acted as a catalyst in highlighting the need for reform of children's services and for ensuring that children's voices should be heard in matters that concern them.

Families in the United Kingdom are experiencing many changes. As divorce and separation rates increase and support from traditional networks decrease, there is growing recognition that in the twenty-first century children's health, at least in developed countries where epidemics are relatively unknown, is determined more by social, environmental, and economic factors than by biological disorders.

Children Living in Relative Poverty

In 1979, when the Conservative government came into power, one in ten children were being raised in families living on 50 percent or less of the average income. When the Labour Government took office in 1997 the number of children being raised in poor households had risen to a staggering one in three. This fall into poverty that many families experienced has had dramatic effects on children's physical and emotional health. The Labour Government commissioned an independent inquiry into inequalities in health and the committee chaired by Sir Donald Acheson (1998) recommended that a high priority should be given to the health of families with young children and that further steps should be taken to improve the living standards of poor families. The government has subsequently pledged to tackle health inequalities and to end child poverty within a generation. It has raised the threshold for defining poverty from 50 percent to 60 percent of median income. The United Kingdom has developed a range of poverty indicators and recent research shows that an interim target of a 25 percent reduction in the number of children living in households with below 60 percent median income

by 2005 is likely to be met, although long-term goals are more problematic (see the Poverty entry).

The impact of health inequalities on children's educational achievement has been recognized. The Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills introduced the National Healthy Schools Standard where schools are encouraged to show a commitment to promoting emotional and physical health in order to reduce health inequalities, promote social exclusion and raise educational standards. Some schools in disadvantaged areas have also introduced school breakfast clubs to ensure a healthy start to the day. There has been increasing concern over the amounts of high fat, high sugar convenience foods that form part of many children's diets and the resulting levels of overweight and obesity amongst children. The national school fruit scheme was introduced in 2001, with the aim that every child between 4 and 6 years should be offered a piece of fresh fruit every day. Interestingly, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver has recently exposed the poor quality and lack of funding for school dinners in a popular television series. The result of this has been an announcement of tougher minimum standards for school dinners from 2006, and new minimum standards for processed foods to limit the amount of fat, salt, and sugar in products such as burgers, sausages, and cakes.

Supporting Families

Emotional and behavioral problems are now the foremost cause of functional disability in children, and concern has increasingly been expressed about the number of children in the United Kingdom who are exhibiting evidence of mental health problems. Bright Futures, the report from the Mental Health Foundation (1999), describes the incidence of mental health problems as follows:

... there are approximately 14.9 million children and young people under twenty living in the UK, representing 25% of the population. It is calculated that at any one time, 20% of children and adolescents experience psychological problems.

There has been increased recognition over the past two decades of the role of families and parenting in influencing children's social and emotional development. In 1999 the government produced a consultation paper "Supporting Families," to explore how families could be supported in their parenting role. It introduced the government's aspirations for family advice, work life balance, and tackling problems such as domestic violence. Subsequently, a National Family and Parenting Institute has been established to study and support family life. (Part of its funds have been devoted to Sure Start schemes to work innovatively in partnership with families with children under 4 years in disadvantaged areas—see introductory section, and sections on under twos and on poverty). Sure Start schemes have made a particular effort to incorporate health services. They have encouraged health, social services, education, and voluntary sector workers to work in partnership. But Sure Start projects are gradually being transformed into or merged with Children's Centres (see introductory section). These centers will now be funded (although not necessarily provided by) by local authorities and will

focus on early education and encouraging parents to gain employment. Health workers will be separately funded, raising concerns about whether the innovative partnership services to support families and promote health and well-being can continue to be developed.

Protecting Children's Health and Well-Being

The death of Victoria Climbié, who was tortured by her foster parents, resulted in a public inquiry to investigate how such a tragedy could happen. The report highlighted many failings in the services to protect children. This led to a government consultation paper that outlined major changes to services. In particular the paper, *Every Child Matters*, emphasized five outcomes:

- Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- Staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect
- Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- Making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behavior
- Economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving full potential in life

This paper laid the foundations for the new Children Act 2004, which also makes the provision for a new Children's Commissioner to act as an independent champion for children, particularly those suffering disadvantage.

Children in the United Kingdom had often been overlooked in a health service provision and services from one area to another were often fragmented. In 2004, a new National Service Framework (NSF) was introduced to set national health standards for children, young people and maternity services. This NSF focuses on early child-centered interventions with a new health promotion program to promote the health of children from conception to adulthood and a remit to tackle health inequalities.

There has been much recent progress in children's health policy but there is still much to be done. Many issues that impact on children's health (for instance domestic violence, or the responsibilities of being a "young carer") are only recently being highlighted. The focus is shifting from physical health to include mental health and well-being and toward listening to young children and their families, in an attempt to ensure that the highest attainable standards of health might be reached.

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Angela Underdown

Teacher Preparation in the United Kingdom

Introduction

Training for work in early childhood services in the United Kingdom has historically been split between “care” and “education.” Some kinds of provision have been seen as predominantly offering “care” and provided either because the child was seen to be at risk, or because the mother wanted or needed employment and was therefore unable to care for her child. Others have been seen as predominantly “education” and therefore directly beneficial for the child. Since a Labour Government was elected in 1997 government policies have produced continuous development in the early year's sector (see Early Childhood Education in the United Kingdom entry, above). Many policymakers and researchers hoped that these traditional understandings of care and education would be challenged in general, in the field of training in particular.

Recent Reforms

The Government paper, *Every Child Matters*, produced partly in response to a notorious child abuse case (see section on health), put forward major proposals for workforce reform in the *care* sector to ensure better protection for children. It aimed to improve the outcomes for children and produce a better integration of all services to children. The five outcomes envisioned were that children should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being. The implementation of these aims entailed major changes to a diverse range of regulations, including inspections, standards, and qualifications. The identification of a “common core of skills, knowledge, and competence for the widest possible range of workers in children's services” (DfES, 2004) was seen as a necessary step forward. Reviews of the National Standards have been conducted for both Under 8's Daycare and Childminding. Additional reviews have examined the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Early Years Care and Education. Finally, revisions have been made to the qualifications framework for the children's workforce, including identifying a common core of skills and knowledge based on the five outcomes. A new Children's Workforce Development Council was also set up as part of the new Sector Skills Council for Social Care, Children and Young People.

During the time that these developments were undertaken by the Children's Workforce Unit of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), another section (the Schools Workforce Unit) was also examining reform. However, these two different sections of the DfES, arriving separately at their conclusions, indicate the continuing divide in the way the children's workforce is conceptualized. Early year's teachers who have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) are considered to be

part of the schools' workforce, regulated by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the General Teaching Council (GTC) while other child "care" workers are regulated by the Children's Workforce Development Council- a body in which, unlike the TTA, private employers are represented.

Early Childhood Education Staff Training Programs

The divisions outlined above are mirrored in the continuing divisions in content and levels of training. A qualified childcare worker at a supervisory level will have a level 3 National Qualifications Framework (NQF) qualification. This normally implies a two-year postsecondary education and training, which can be gained before the age of 18. A QTS teacher—as indicated below—is expected to demonstrate much higher levels of knowledge and competence.

Vocational qualifications. The level 3 NQF qualification can be gained by one of two main routes. One approach is to obtain a college diploma program that includes practicum placements. Alternately, students may obtain a vocational qualification (NVQ) via an employment-based route. The latter relies on outcome and competence assessed performance to achieve the qualification.

The content of these NVQs is being reviewed to match the revised National Occupational Standards (NOS). The standards were revised in 2004 in line with the five outcomes now given legal force in the Children Act 2004 (DfES 2004). They applied no longer only to the early years (0–8), but extended to age 16 and were renamed *National Occupational Standards in Children's Care, Learning and Development*.

Draft proposals for the revised level 3 NVQ suggest that it should be a nine-unit qualification, comprising five mandatory units. These include the following:

- develop and promote positive relationships;
- develop and maintain a healthy, safe, and secure environment for children;
- promote children's development;
- reflect on and develop practice; and
- protect and promote children's rights.

There are also four further units from a choice of thirty-six.

There is also a similar but lower NVQ qualification at level 2 (equivalent to a secondary school diploma) intended for other nonsupervisory workers in nurseries. At present, nearly half the child care workforce has either no qualification and training, or a level 2 qualification. There is high staff turnover and a shortage of skilled staff in the sector.

Teacher training programs. In contrast to the basic vocational level 2 and level 3 qualifications required for qualified child-care workers, qualified early year's teachers are normally required to complete four years of university level education, that is a basic three-year degree and a professional qualification: the postgraduate certificate of education (PGCE), which takes an additional year to complete. Once students have successfully completed their training and practice, they receive qualified teacher status (QTS). They are then qualified to teach children from age three onward in maintained sector nursery schools and classes. QTS teachers train

to “teach across at least two consecutive key stages” (DfES/TTA, 2002). For those training as specialist early years teachers, this corresponds to the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum (see section on curriculum) for children aged 3–5 and the Key Stage 1, for ages five to seven (See The Early Years Curriculum—United Kingdom entry, above).

Although students may obtain a variety of degrees leading up to the PGCE, the syllabus for the PGCE itself is tightly controlled by the Teacher Training Agency and enforced by frequent OfSTED inspections (Office for Standards in Education). Half of the 36-week course must be spent in mentored school practice. Knowledge of the National Curriculum for the appropriate age group is mandatory. There is relatively little opportunity to acquire any specialist knowledge of child development and early years.

Enhancing professionalism

Early Years QTS teachers have the same pay and conditions as those teaching primary and secondary-age school children. Teachers are therefore better paid and have better conditions of service than any other part of the “childcare/early years” workforce. On average they are likely to be paid almost twice as much as other members of the early years workforce. However, they are a very minor part of this workforce—less than 10 percent, and their training is heavily school based.

One attempt to improve the child care and teaching workforce, as well as to bolster recruitment, has been to introduce Foundation Degrees in Early Years. These are degree courses of two rather than three years, duration aimed at people already in relevant employment, such as nursery assistants working in primary schools. Doing a “Sure Start” Endorsed Foundation Degree would allow existing practitioners to improve their qualifications. Those who wish to continue may complete a further year to acquire an honors degree and/or become a qualified teacher. Unlike three-year honors degrees, in which individual universities decide on the content and delivery of the syllabus, the Sector Endorsed degree is strictly controlled. Those who gain the Foundation Degree can be given the title of “Senior Practitioner.” However, this does not carry an increased salary. Nor is there any statutory requirement within the School Sector to appoint Senior Practitioners. There is some concern that this quick route to a teaching qualification may ultimately prove relatively worthless for those seeking to advance their careers within the sector.

The only current graduate education and training aimed specifically at crossing the care and education divide is the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) degree. The idea of an ECS degree was put forward during the 1980s and 1990s by various campaigners advocating for integrated early education and care provision, long before there was any government commitment to providing universal integrated children’s centres. This integrated ECS degree is on offer to young students just beginning tertiary education, but is also intended to offer a route into training for staff with basic vocational qualifications working in the care sector who constitute the majority of the workforce. About forty higher education institutions now offer Early Childhood Studies degrees, often recruiting mature women from within the sector. These individuals help to professionalize work with children from birth

to age eight. Their position differs from that of nursery teachers, who are not currently trained for work with children younger than three and focus mainly on curricular issues.

Future Goals

The government aspires to have a “better qualified workforce.” Prompted by recent UK research which demonstrates that having qualified teachers in the early years improves young children’s subsequent school performance (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons et al., 2003), the government states two aims. The first is to improve “the qualifications and skills of early years workers, with more trained to degree level.” The second is to ensure that all full day care settings are led by “fit-for-purpose” graduate qualified early year’s professionals, such as pedagogues or “new teachers.” (DfES, 2005, p. 25). So far, a new post-graduate professional qualification, the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL), is being piloted in order to meet the commitment to improve leadership. It has been recognized that workforce reform is necessary, and that a new core graduate professional may be needed. The choices put forward for consultation are between the Danish Social Pedagogue model and the “new” teacher model of Sweden or New Zealand (DfES, 2005). The barriers are a lack of commitment to changing statutory requirements for existing qualifications, especially teaching; and the failure to provide the finance necessary to achieve professional rates of pay and conditions of work throughout the sector.

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Pamela Calder

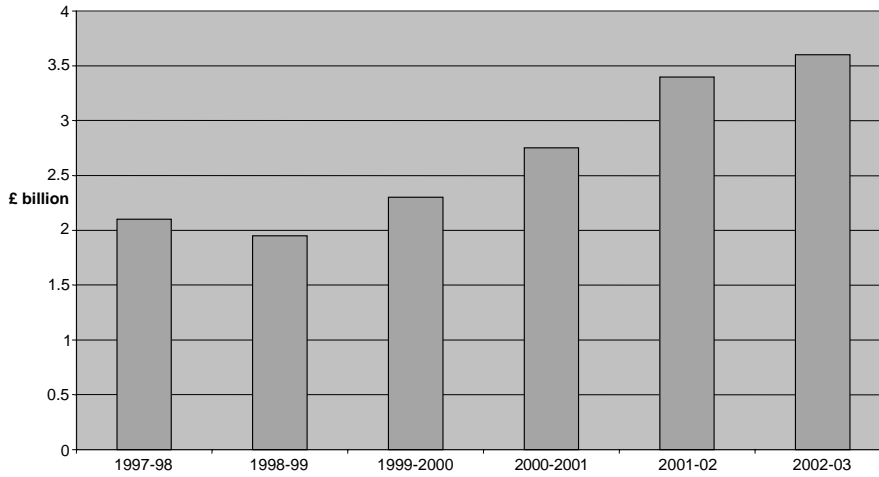
Financing Early Care and Education in the United Kingdom

Expenditure Levels

Expenditure on early education and care has been rising since 1997 when the Labour Government took office. The Government currently spends about £1500 per year per child on early years, compared with just over £3000 for a primary-school aged child and just under £4000 for a secondary-aged child.

The distribution of costs of early years education and care in England is illustrated in the chart below. Parents pay 45 percent of total costs of early education and care provision, or approximately 85 percent of the costs of child-care

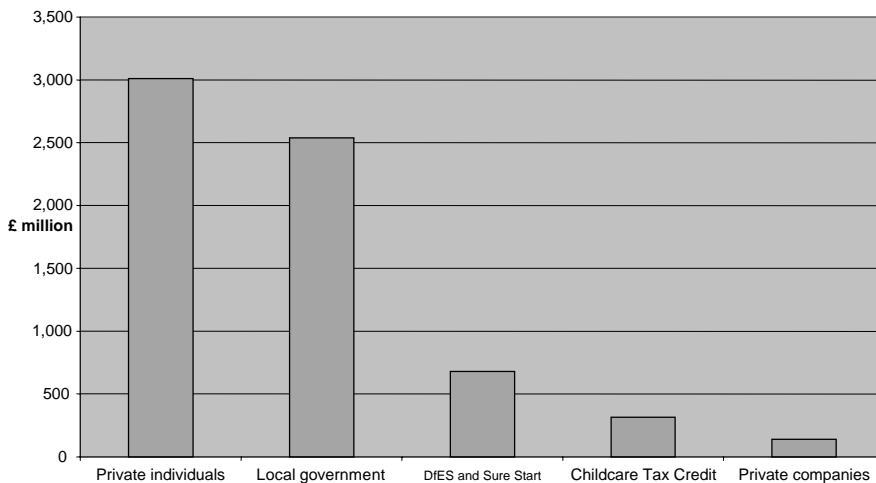
Government expenditure on early years since 1997



Source: National Audit Office, 2004

provision. The state contributes 38 percent for nursery education for 3- and 4-year-olds and a further 10 percent for Sure Start and other initiatives, and 5 percent in tax credits—a total of 53 percent of costs. Companies/employers pay approximately 2 percent of the costs.

How early years provision is paid for 2002-03



Source: National Audit Office, 2004

There are, or have been, a number of other short-term grants available for new initiatives. These include lottery money distributed through the New Opportunities Fund; training funds provided by the Learning and Skills Council (mainly for workplace-based basic vocational qualifications); special antipoverty initiative funds such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Single Regeneration Budget, and New Deal for Communities; and special European Social Fund collaborative

programmes. The plethora of these short-term funds, the complicated arrangements for applying for them, and the uncertainty about the future once the grant expires, has deterred people from applying for them and take-up has been less than predicted.

The Daycare Trust conducts an annual survey of childcare costs. The 2005 survey suggests that the costs parents pay to providers have been rising, with the greatest increase in London where there has been an annual rise of 17 percent over 2004/2005. For under-twos there has been a national 7.3 percent rise. Costs generally are high. For a child aged 0–2 the average weekly cost is £138 and for a child aged 3–4, £129. These averages mask considerable differences. The highest reported costs are £350 per child per week in parts of London. There is no evidence that cost is directly related to quality of provision, since all day nurseries must meet minimum requirements for ratios, qualifications, and space and are subject to regular inspection. The costs for childminding, or family day care, are slightly lower. The average weekly cost for a child 0–2 is £129, and for a child aged 3–4, £126. The survey data suggested that for 65 percent of parents affordability was a problem.

Approximately 60–70 percent of costs are staff related, but property costs, especially in London, are also high. Nursery staff, about half of whom have any kind of qualification (usually the most basic), receive the minimum wage or just above. The average gross salary of a child-care worker is £7,800 per annum (compared to £22,662 for a graduate trained primary teacher). Staff turnover is considered to be a problem by 84 percent of providers, suggesting that the workforce is not stable enough to provide a high-quality service, despite the regulations which are in place. Provider turnover is also high.

Key Questions

The affordability of care for parents, the costs of staffing, and capital costs, particularly in urban areas, are unresolved issues in the Government's attempts to expand and develop early education and care.

Early education is free for 3- and 4-year-old children, but of short daily duration. Care is very expensive. The Government's preferred solution has been in the form of tax credits, compensating parents for the costs that they pay toward care. The childcare tax credit was introduced in 1999. However recent research reported by Alakeson suggests that the childcare tax credit mainly benefits middle class families. Unskilled women or lone parents are deterred from working, since the low wages they are likely to earn will not compensate for the benefits they lose by working. The child-care tax credit has almost no direct impact on child poverty. As illustrated above, it only accounts for around 5 percent of the costs of education and care. Any fiscal policy to support child care has to take a wider view of the tax and benefit system.

The child-care sector is characterized by high staff turnover and low levels of qualification. The Government has recognized that its current training requirements for nurseries have been set too low. The most recent Government consultation papers on workforce recruitment and training now suggest that levels of training should be set higher with graduates in management posts (see UK

training section). However a better qualified workforce will require higher remuneration, and since the costs parents pay are already high, it is unlikely that they will be able to meet increased costs. The Government has currently set aside £125 million for training, but this is a small proportion of the costs that will be incurred in achieving and maintaining a better-qualified workforce.

Much child-care provision, especially in urban areas, is in converted accommodation, private houses, shop fronts, redundant churches, and so on. Although there are internal space requirements, the requirement for outside space for children can be waived in urban areas. The Government has allocated capital funds to support new buildings in urban areas of deprivation, where entrepreneurs are in any case unlikely to invest capital, but generally nursery stock is poor.

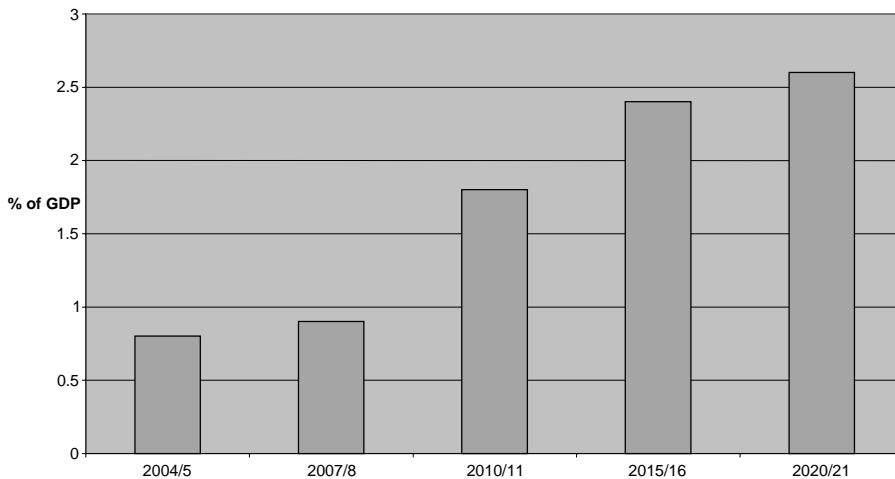
These problems of creating more nursery provision in poor districts, coupled with evidence from cost-benefit studies that suggest investment in early education and care brings significant returns in terms of education outcomes for children and for women's employment, have led some organizations to argue for a major shift from demand led child care to supply led child care, including a rethinking of the tax and benefit system. The consultants PriceWaterhouseCoopers were asked to cost various aspects of early years services, for example, parental leave, setting out costs as a percentage of GDP, and suggesting what level of parental contribution could reasonably be expected for each aspect. The likely increase in total costs were projected over a ten-year period. In a separate cost-benefit exercise, not listed here, PriceWaterhouseCooper also estimated the extra revenue that would accrue to the Exchequer as a result of greater workforce participation and in terms of improved circumstances for children who received early childhood services. They concluded that the increased costs could be gradually met, and would be significantly offset by increased revenue.

Estimated costs of vision for early years provision 2020

	<i>Cost to government (%GDP)</i>	<i>Parental contribution (% GDP)</i>	<i>Total cost (% GDP)</i>	<i>£billion at 2004/2005 GDP values</i>
12 months parental leave	0.5	-	0.5	5.7
Home care allowance for 1-year-olds	0.1	-	0.1	1.6
Subsidized care alternative for 1-year-olds	0.3	0.1	0.4	4.8
20 hours pw free education for 2- to 4-year-olds	0.6	-	0.6	7.1
Wrap around care for 2- to 4-year-olds	0.4	0.2	0.6	7.1
Holiday/after-school care for 5- to 14-year-olds	0.3	0.1	0.4	4.1
Total costs	2.2	0.4	2.6	30.4

Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers report in Alakeson, The Social Market Foundation, 2005

Build-up of costs over time: SMF vision vs 10 year childcare strategy



Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers report in Alakeson. The Social Market Foundation, 2005

There is an additional argument about whether provision should be publicly provided or whether the private market is sufficiently flexible to provide accessible and affordable childcare for all. Early education is mainly provided in the public sector, child care in the private sector. The Government has acknowledged that in poorer districts of the United Kingdom, the local authority has at the very least to oversee, if not directly provide, the development of multipurpose children's centers which will cater for the poorest and most vulnerable children. An expansion program of 3,500 graduate led children's centers is currently being commissioned, although at the time of writing the revenue funds needed to run such centers have not yet been costed or allocated. It is unlikely that they will be long-term funding arrangements.

The Government has invested considerable new money in early education and care but it still spends less than most comparable European countries as a percentage of GDP. Unless both the levels and patterns of expenditure are revised, it is impossible for it to meet its ambitious targets.

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