

Preface

Early care and education is of concern to everyone who wants to live in an economically sound democracy. Although the early years have been traditionally the domain of early childhood professionals and parents, the rest of the society is beginning now to pay attention to what research has been telling us for a long time—“The first years last forever,” as the slogan goes. Early care and education isn’t just about preparing individuals for success in life, but also about giving them the kind of experiences that make them productive citizens of a democratic society. In *quality* early care and education programs, children not only gain the foundations they need for school success and beyond, but they also learn to interact in cooperative ways with others, the basis for gaining a sense of community. Rugged individualism was badly needed in the frontier days of the United States, but today we face huge challenges in creating unity through diversity and keeping the economy healthy. A good beginning in a *high quality* early care and education program can lead to both social and economic benefits and is a great investment for the society to make. It’s the kind of investment that will grow from generation to generation. Individuals reap the benefits of this investment and so does society.

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

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

THEMES OF THIS BOOK

Critical Thinking Skills

This text explains theory in such practical ways that students can take sophisticated information in stride and understand its usefulness right away. The book

talks directly *to* the student *from* the author, person-to-person. The text makes it clear that there is no formula for “correct” behavior in every situation. Students are encouraged to use critical thinking along with self-reflection rather than looking for right answers. To do this, the text sometimes provides a particular viewpoint, but then asks students to use it as a backboard off of which they can bounce their own ideas. Following NAEYC’s advice in the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* book, students are urged to make decisions about what is best for each child and family based on child development principles as well as the child’s and family’s individual and cultural background.

Integrated Subject Matter

As you become familiar with the text you will notice that the book is unique in many ways. Part of the uniqueness shows in the way important themes and subjects are integrated throughout. For example, diversity isn’t a separate chapter but a main theme throughout the book. Working with children with special needs is also integrated throughout—in chapters on guiding behavior (Chapter 5), modeling adult relationships (Chapter 7), and setting up the physical environment (Chapter 8) among others. This book is about the care and education of *all* children, including those with special needs. Observation is another strand that weaves through the book. Guidance is also a strand. Set apart in its own chapter, guidance strategies also appear wherever students might need them for helping children solve problems and resolve conflicts.

The Link Between Care and Education

A quick look through the chapter headings makes evident some of the unconventional approaches the book takes. Why is there a chapter on routines—those essential activities of daily living that involve physical care such as eating, toileting, and even diaper changing? That emphasis reflects the fact that care and education can’t be separated in the early years. Also routines are featured because this book addresses the needs of infants and toddlers as well as children ages 3–8. The younger the child the more important (and educational) are the care-focused activities. The chapter on routines also reflects the fact that even in preschool and primary classrooms, some children with special needs may still need the kind of physical care that falls under the classification of caregiving routines.

Developmental Information: Birth Through Age 8

Why does the information about ages and stages appear in Chapter 11 instead of Chapter 1, and where are the familiar chapter headings of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development? Those have all been reconstructed into new forms and folded into the text in innovative ways. These changes may challenge traditionally minded people. But with an open mind and a little readjustment, the organization makes sense. Developmental information is presented differently,

but never minimized. One of the basic glues that holds our profession together is the general agreement about the value of developmental research. The Program Standards for the NAEYC Accreditation uses the word “development” 19 times in their 10 standards. The words we use show our values and our perspectives; the same is true for organizations. Developmental perspectives are important parts of this text, but they are not universal. Many people in the world have different ways of explaining why and how children grow and change. That fact doesn’t invalidate NAEYC’s standards, it just reminds us that respecting diversity means honoring multiple perspectives on even the most basic well-researched concepts, such as developmental patterns.

Modeling as Teaching

Another innovation is reflected in the two chapters on modeling as a way of teaching children. The point is that when adults are focused outwardly on the children, they often ignore their own behavior and the unspoken messages they are giving. Children pick up adult attitudes and accompanying behaviors. Since diversity and equity are important subjects of this book, adults must model acceptance of diversity and behaviors that lead to equity.

Family-Centered Approach

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

New to the Fourth Edition

Updated scholarship appears in each chapter and is reflected in References and For Further Reading.

New Features

- Voices of Experience stories—read about the real-life challenges, lessons, and successes of early childhood experts and educators in these boxes, which reflect the themes of the chapter content.
- Key vocabulary now defined in the margins where it first occurs.

Other important additions

- Addressing obesity in children: health and nutrition (Chapter 10)
 With obesity in childhood being an ever increasing problem, this subject is addressed by giving examples of prevention programs that include educational approaches to providing nutritional information to children and to parents as well as to improving meals and snacks in the program. Exercise is another important approach to addressing obesity, especially when done outside in fresh air and, when possible, in natural surroundings.
- Nature, exercise, exploration, and the outdoors (Chapter 2, Chapter 6, and Chapter 8)
 Addressing the issue that many children are deprived of natural surroundings, children derive huge benefits when they are allowed to spend time in natural environments. They learn to appreciate nature, and they begin to become aware of the importance of its preservation. They derive health benefits and also enjoy a side benefit of violence reduction.
- Exploring male role models in early care and education programs (Chapter 6)
 Although males have always been included in examples in this text, this edition points out the need for more males in real-life early childhood programs. Boys who lack male role models in their lives benefit by having daily contact with men who are early childhood educators. Everyone benefits by having the diversity that men provide.

Increased coverage on

- Early literacy
- Diversity and equity
- Children with special needs
- Violence prevention
- History of early childhood education: Pioneers and theorists added:
 - Uri Bronfenbrenner
 - Abraham Maslow
 - Rudolf Steiner
 - Emmi Pikler
- Developmentally appropriate practice

FEATURES

- **Part-Opening Introductions** provide readers with an overview of the chapters to follow, pointing out how each informs the larger message of the part.
- A **Chapter Outline** begins each chapter to lay out the key topics.

- The *In This Chapter You Will Discover* sections provide readers with a listing of what they should learn by reading the chapters.
- New **marginal links** key content to the **NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards**.
- *Focus on Diversity* boxes allow readers to understand differences in new ways.
- **Marginal definitions** explain key terms at the point where they appear in the text.
- *Point of View* boxes provide two sides of an argument or idea.
- *The Theory Behind the Practice* boxes link content to the theory supporting it.
- New *Voices of Experience* boxes present real-life stories from real-life practitioners.
- *A Story to End With* concludes each chapter with a brief scenario related to the chapter's topic.
- A **summary** provides a conclusion to each chapter.
- *Online Resources* remind the reader of the study materials available in the Online Learning Center at www.mbhe.com.
- *Reflection Questions* encourage students to consider and apply the chapter's topics.
- *Terms to Know* lists key terms discussed in this chapter.
- *For Further Reading* presents a listing of suggested related readings.

SUPPLEMENTS

For the Instructor

Instructors' Resource CD-ROM. The text is accompanied by an IRCD that includes the instructor's manual, test bank, and computerized test bank.

Instructor's Online Learning Center. Located at www.mbhe.com/gonzalez-found3e, the Instructor's area of the Online Learning Center includes the password-protected instructor's manual and other resources.

For the Student

Resources for Observation and Reflection. This resource, available for free download from the Online Learning Center, includes an Observation Guide with guidelines and forms for observing children, Reflection Questions to accompany each chapter of the text, extensive listings of journal, books, video and Web resources, and the NAEYC Standards and Position Papers referenced in the text. Students can purchase a print copy of this guide by calling McGraw-Hill customer service at 1-800-338-3987.

Online Learning Center. Located at www.mhhe.com/, the Online Learning Center includes a student study guide with quizzes and Web links, as well as the Resources for Observation and Reflection Guide.

Diversity in Early Care and Education Programs, 4e by Janet Gonzalez-Mena. This briefer text focuses on diversity in early care and education programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the reviewers who offered so much useful feedback, insight, and wisdom for the revision of this fourth edition:

Jeanne Barker, *Tallahassee Community College*

Linda Boettcher, *Red Rocks Community College*

Karen Callahan, *Central Piedmont Community College*

Johanna Hartnett, *SUNY Cortland*

Marilyn Moore, *Illinois State University*

Carrie Rothstein-Fisch, *California State University, Northridge*

Nancy Schwider, *The College of DuPage*