

WHO AM I IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN?

Fourth Edition



Feeney / Christensen / Moravcik



***WHO AM I
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**WHO AM I
IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN?
An Introduction
to Teaching Young Children**

STEPHANIE FEENEY
University of Hawaii

DORIS CHRISTENSEN
Early Childhood Consultant

EVA MORAVCIK
University of Hawaii

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FOREWORD

Studying from a book like *Who Am I in the Lives of Children?* is not the easy way to become a teacher, but it *is* the way to become a good teacher. And the premise that, as a teacher, you need to constantly reassess your role in the lives of children is no doubt the reason this text continues to be a core in the field of early childhood education. Young children need teachers who are not machines, not simply memories. They need people with searching hearts and seeking minds, people who are always trying to better understand themselves, their job, their young charges, and the world around them. This book will surely help you become this sort of teacher.

We have all probably heard it said that good teachers are born, not made. This expression has been around for a long time, which is unfortunate because there's only a grain of truth in it and a lot of error. While it certainly helps teachers of young children to have been born with strong bodies, good eyes, keen hearing, quick reflexes, a generous share of brains,

strong backs, and healthy arches, the expression is completely inaccurate in its denial that good teachers are *made*. As teachers function in the classroom—dealing with behavior, providing instruction, coping with problems, and, most of all, preventing problems—they continually call upon skills and techniques that have become second nature to them. There is no end to their tricks of the trade. The notion that there is nothing “made” in a good teacher is an absurdity. No one is born with a skilled teacher's know-how. You have to learn it—both in your training and on the job.

One important strength of all of the editions of *Who Am I in the Lives of Children?* is the multiplicity of these practical, down-to-earth approaches in early childhood education. Interspersed throughout the text are pages of guidelines, strategies, and suggestions for coping with the many troublesome parts of teaching. Over and over the reader comes upon the statement “We have found in our experience . . . ,” and then realistic, sound ideas follow.

Much as I admire this flow of valuable, concrete specifics, I admire even more the underlying concepts behind the practical approach. The authors see that teachers are made, but they also see that a teacher is more than a bundle of tricks. While a teacher is made through good professional training, a teacher is also a whole human, a product of inheritance (that grain of truth mentioned earlier), a product of professional training, *and* a product of all kinds of day-by-day experiences: as a child, as an adolescent, and as an adult. The authors respect the fact that the whole life we lead helps make us good teachers, just as the whole of life is integral to the children we teach. We teach out of all that we are: everything that has happened and happens to us—all the joys and all the sorrows. This book respects the human in you, the reader, and, as important, the humanness of children.

As the authors present their myriad ideas, you will become a part of the process and, because of this, the ideas stand a better chance of ending up as part of your perceptions, rather than remaining the authors'. This is particularly remarkable because the authors do not hide their own points of view. Time and again they use words like: "We are convinced . . ." or "We find we are no longer able to support educational approaches that . . ."

But the authors know that if teachers are to respect children, they themselves must be respected. Convinced of this, they are primarily concerned with the development of thoughtful teachers. They want people in the classroom who go through a never-ending process of questioning about themselves, about children, about the world children live in. Over and over they ask such questions as: "What are your values?" "What are you after?" "What are the ethical implications of this practice?" In its whole design, the book says to the reader: "Think, don't memorize; question, don't simply accept." The book presents a chart and says: "This is designed to help you choose . . ." It makes statements like "both self-contained and open-

design classrooms can be effective, and both have drawbacks" and invites the reader to be the judge.

Many changes affecting young children have taken place since I wrote the first Foreword for the second edition. The pressures on family life continue to mount: continuing increases in divorce and separation; growing numbers of single parents; steady rises in the number of mothers in the labor force; the persistence of poverty for too many; the endangerment of our ecological systems. . . These have gone hand-in-hand with, and are reflected in, new demands placed on schools. The need for top-quality child care, especially in infant and toddler programs, becomes increasingly critical. Advocacy for children, the needs of families, and professional issues that impact the quality of early childhood education have moved to the forefront. These have not been times that build stability into children's lives.

This new edition makes a worthy contribution in this situation. The earlier strengths are all here: the clarity of the authors' stands; their down-to-earth specificity meshed with wide-ranging concerns for values and ethics; the richness of their own experiences; their honesty; their concern for the reader as a human. New content even further strengthens the book: increased coverage of professional ethics; a new chapter on play; greater emphasis on the needs of the family; an exploration of the movement toward professionalization of the field.

The adage warns, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The earlier edition wasn't "broke," but this edition is even better. It is very welcome at a time when more and more children, more vulnerable, are apt to be in groups at younger and younger ages for longer and longer hours. The need for sensitive, skilled teachers is especially keen. Those who read this book, puzzling and thinking as they do it, are sure to join that number.

James L. Hymes, Jr.
Carmel, California

PREFACE

Who Am I in the Lives of Children? is about becoming a teacher of young children. It provides an overview of the field of early childhood education and of programs for children between birth and age eight with a primary focus on practice in programs for preschool and kindergarten children (three through five years of age). It can be used in two and four year college programs, in courses in early childhood foundations and curriculum, and for short courses and workshops for practicing teachers. It is also suitable for helping students to acquire the competencies required for the Child Development Associate Credential.

Since the first edition of *Who Am I in the Lives of Children?* was published in 1979 we have used it in a variety of settings and geographical locations. The fourth edition reflects a process of rethinking of old ideas and acquiring and integrating new information and experiences; it also reflects numerous recent developments in the field.

When we wrote the previous editions we lived near each other and often worked in the same settings. For the last several years we have lived in different parts of the country and have not been able to write together on a regular basis. This new edition has the benefit of two periods of uninterrupted writing time, one in a quiet cabin on the slopes of Haleakala in Maui and the other in an old house on a windswept beach on Oahu. For the first time in several years we have had the opportunity to share our experiences, to discuss how these have been influenced by new developments in the field and to reflect on changes in our ways of thinking about and working with children and teachers.

We have reorganized the chapters into five broad topics and broadened the focus to include the entire early childhood age range from infancy through eight years. Part III, Living and Learning with Children, and Part IV, The Curriculum, focus on practice with children three through five years of age. At the end of each chapter in these parts, we include a section on

adapting programs for infants and toddlers and primary school children.

A new chapter on children's play has been added, as has a section on health and safety curriculum. Content on teacher values, history, and the field has been reorganized. We have added more information in a number of areas of current concern including ethics, environmental issues, war play, anti-bias curriculum, appropriate software for young children, child abuse, testing and evaluation, and new approaches to literacy development. Growing national awareness of the needs of families and the resulting legislative initiatives are discussed, as are the critical issues of affordability, staff salaries, and the retention of teachers in programs for children under five. We also explore the current movement toward professionalization of the field of early childhood education.

Our basic values and philosophy remain the same. Yet revisions need to be made to reflect rapidly occurring changes. Today it is common to see articles in national and local publications concerning issues that were once exclusively discussed by people in our field. In the last presidential election child care was a major campaign issue. The societal changes that make early childhood education and the needs of families so prevalent are reflected in this new edition. Tomorrow's early childhood educators must have, in addition to a commitment to high quality education, knowledge of broader societal issues and the ability to advocate for the rights and needs of young children.

Our ideas have been profoundly shaped by the field of early childhood education, which has a unique history and philosophy. We draw upon theoretical work in psychology, human development, and education of John Dewey, Erik Erikson, Margaret Mahler, Maria Montessori, Abraham Maslow, Jean Piaget, Carl Rogers, Lev Vygotsky, and others. We have been influenced by writers who have vividly portrayed the educational process. Among them: Sylvia Ashton-

Warner, Bruno Bettelheim, George Dennison, John Holt, Herb Kohl, A. S. Neill, and Vivian Paley. We have also learned a great deal from our association with many fine early childhood educators, including Barbara Biber, Barbara Bowman, Elizabeth Brady, Harriet Cuffaro, Richard Feldman, Marjorie Fields, Elizabeth Gilkeson, Randy Hitz, James L. Hymes, Elizabeth Jones, Daniel Jordan, Lilian Katz, and Docia Zavitkovsky.

We wish to recognize some of the very special people who have contributed to our growth and understanding of children and programs and who have provided invaluable assistance in structuring the material in this book. First and most important we thank the children and families we have worked with and who have taught us so much. We have learned and grown from our association with The University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center. We especially appreciate the staff's attention to relationships, the quality of the experiences they provide for children and families, and their tolerance of a director whose attention has been diverted by writing a book.

We continue to be deeply indebted to students in the early childhood education programs in which we have taught. We have learned a great deal from our interactions with them. Graduate students in early childhood education at the University of Hawaii, both past and present, have been a tremendous source of intellectual stimulation, feedback, and assistance in our thinking and writing. Our special thanks to Robyn Chun, Diana Ginsburg, Mary Goya, Lisa Foster, Christine Jackson, Evon Kawamoto, Mary Ann Lester, Carol Phelps, Kathleen Reinhardt, and Laverna Westfall.

We are especially grateful to students and former students who helped with research and writing of this book. Christine Jackson and Linda Buck worked with us on the chapter on children with special needs in the second and third editions (originally funded by a grant from the

Bureau of Education for the Handicapped of the U.S. Office of Education). Kathleen Reinhardt worked on research and writing on the section on literacy development for the third edition and Robyn Chun allowed us to draw from her research for Chapter 4, Child Development. A very, very special thank you to Diana Ginsburg for diligent research and thoughtful assistance in drafting revisions for chapters on the field, history, and children with special needs. Given the busy schedules of the authors it is unlikely that we could have met our publication deadline without Diana's help.

Work on professional ethics in early childhood education described in Chapter 1 was developed by Stephanie Feeney and Kenneth Kipnis, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hawaii, under grants from the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Special thanks to Lynda Stone, Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations at University of Hawaii, for her very helpful comments and to Kenneth Kipnis for his help in writing the material on professional ethics.

Special thanks to Linda McCormick, University of Hawaii Professor of Special Education, for sharing her knowledge and reviewing the chapter on special needs children; to Rebecca Severeide for sharing materials and for helpful comments; and to Anita Trubitt for contributions to sections on music curriculum and temperament. Discussions and correspondence with Robert Peters, Headmaster of Hanahauoli School in Honolulu, with Elizabeth Jones of Pacific Oaks College, and Marjorie Fields of the University of Alaska at Juneau have contributed greatly to our thinking about the topic of curriculum planning as reflected in Chapter 10.

Hella Hammid is an extraordinary photographer of children and we are delighted to be able to continue to feature her work in this book. We are also pleased that she was able to come to Hawaii to take a series of wonderful

new photographs especially for this edition. Hella's photographs communicate the experience of childhood with power and sensitivity that we are sure will add to your enjoyment of this text.

New photographs for this edition were taken at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center, Hanahauoli School, Pearl Harbor Sub Base Child Development Center, and Castle Medical Center Child Development Center. We appreciate cooperation from the children, staff and parents of these schools. Photos taken for previous editions that are used here were taken at Pacific Oaks Children's School, The Harold E. Jones Child Study Center, Maggie Haves School, John Adams Child Development Center, Beverly Hills Montessori School, the Clay Street Center, St. Thomas Parish Preschool, and Hill 'n Dale Family Learning Center in California, and St. Timothy's Children's Center and the Early School in Hawaii.

This edition comes forth with an attention to detail and design that far surpasses previous editions of the text. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the many people at Merrill/Macmillan who helped shape this new edition: Mary Irvin, our efficient production editor; Deb Fargo, text designer; Mark Garrett, coordinator of the art and photo programs; Linda Sullivan, Editor; and Linda Peterson, our Developmental Editor, who prodded us every inch of the way.

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We also acknowledge the contribution to our thinking and to our lives made by our dear friend Jean Fargo. Jean models a splendid inquiring mind and the combination of caring and rigorous thought. Thanks to Don Mickey for editing, computer consultation, coffee and

much, much more. No book is written without affecting the lives of those closest to the authors. We thank, appreciate, and offer appologies to Dylan Stanfield, Denny Dobbin, Jeffrey Reese,

and Don Mickey, who supported our work with patience and good humor.

S. F., D. C. and E. M.
Honolulu, Hawaii

INTRODUCTION



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