

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TODAY

FIFTH EDITION



George S. Morrison

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Florida International University

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This book is affectionately dedicated to B.J., a very able helpmate

PREFACE

The world of early childhood education is one of constant change. Just as we professionals make important transitions in our lives, so must we be prepared to help young children make transitions in their lives. The 1990s promise to be exciting and challenging for children, parents, and teachers. This period of transition from one millennium to another will provide many opportunities and rewards for early childhood educators. And it is hoped that the fifth edition of *Early Childhood Education Today* will help prepare teachers to rightfully, knowledgeably, and confidently assume their role in educating young children of the twenty-first century.

GOALS AND COVERAGE

Early Childhood Education Today provides educators with a thorough introduction to the field of early childhood education by offering an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of current programs and practices, the historical foundation of early childhood education, and recent trends and issues in the field. One of the central aims of this book is to familiarize students with and help them understand theory so that they can implement exemplary practice. After being given developmental information and developmentally appropriate practice for infants to eight-year-olds, students can under-

stand and evaluate for themselves what is developmentally appropriate. Chapter-length coverage is given to each of the key issues of involving parents, guiding children's behavior, and teaching students with special needs. Concepts, activities, and practices described in this book are developmentally appropriate, multiculturally inclusive, and child centered.

Early Childhood Education Today seeks to promote the competence and effectiveness of all early childhood professionals, teachers, and caregivers in child care settings, infant and toddler programs, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, the early primary grades, and Head Start programs.

NEW IN THE FIFTH EDITION

The fifth edition of *Early Childhood Education Today* has been extensively revised. Following are some of the key changes in this edition:

- A chapter on future trends in early childhood education (Chapter 16) has been added, encouraging students to think about where early childhood education is headed and what is currently affecting its course.
- The information on child development has been updated throughout the book, particularly in the child care, preschool, and kindergarten chapters. These three chapters

have also been expanded to include new material related to teaching and child care practices.

- New program vignettes illustrate real-life applications of current educational theory and help the reader translate theory into practice.
- Contemporary issues of concern to early childhood educators have been added—including stress in young children; AIDS; homelessness; the effects of crack-cocaine on the unborn, newborn, and developing child; disease control in child care programs; and drug prevention programs.
- This edition better emphasizes the continuity of education from birth to age eight.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like earlier editions, this fifth edition has been written with a deep sense of pride in all who teach, care for, and parent young children. I agree with Froebel, Montessori, and Dewey that teaching is a redemptive calling and that early childhood educators should strive to achieve their best to help children and their families. This view of teaching is echoed in the portraits of Teachers of the Year in Chapter 15.

During the revision process, I met and talked with many people who are deeply committed to educating young children. I am always impressed and touched by the openness, honesty, and unselfish sharing of ideas that characterize these professional colleagues. Those who shared of themselves and their ideas were Virginia Boone, Beverly McGhee, Miriam Mades, Marsha Poster, Natalie Kaplan, Donna McClelland, Patricia Boyles, Mary Wilson, Brenda McDaniel, E. Dollie Wolverton, Gina Barclay-McLaughlin, Ann Dehan, Harriet Midget, Sally Schur, John Staley, Glenna Markey, Etta Mae Swalm, Gail D. Gonzalez, Robert A. Rodriguez, Keith Osborne, Robert Keiser, Michael W. Jones, Yvonne Hatfield, Harriet Egertson, Connie Iverson, Ruth Cripps, Shirley Crozier, Jamie MacIntyre-Southworth, Louisa Birch, Bernice

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Any major revision of a text requires the committed involvement of very special people. This fifth edition is as comprehensive and up-to-date as it is because of the extraordinary involvement of the following people.

Cynthia H. Haralson, Ph.D., is a child development specialist with the Dade County Public Schools and adjunct professor of early childhood education at Florida International University. Cindy provided many excellent examples to help clarify textual material, and contributed the Chapter 15 vignette, “Growing from a Student to a Professional.” She also facilitated the creative process and injected a sense of vitality and dedication to the sections on developmentally appropriate curricula.

Silvia La Villa is director of curriculum development at Holy Cross Child Care Center in Miami Florida and a doctoral candidate at Florida International University. She provided excellent advice and information regarding migrant education and the CDA process and helped ensure that multiculturalism would be a dominant theme throughout the fifth edition. Silvia also provided editorial assistance and advice about current programs and ideas.

Cristina M. Larrea, a mechanical engineering student at Florida International University, provided outstanding assistance in research, organization, and compilation. When facts and dates were needed, Cristina always found the most appropriate and up-to-date source.

José Mario Gonzalez Granados, an electrical engineering student at Florida International University, is a master facilitator and coordinator of human and material resources. He provided invaluable assistance in research and compilation.

I would like to also thank the reviewers of the previous four editions as well as the fol-

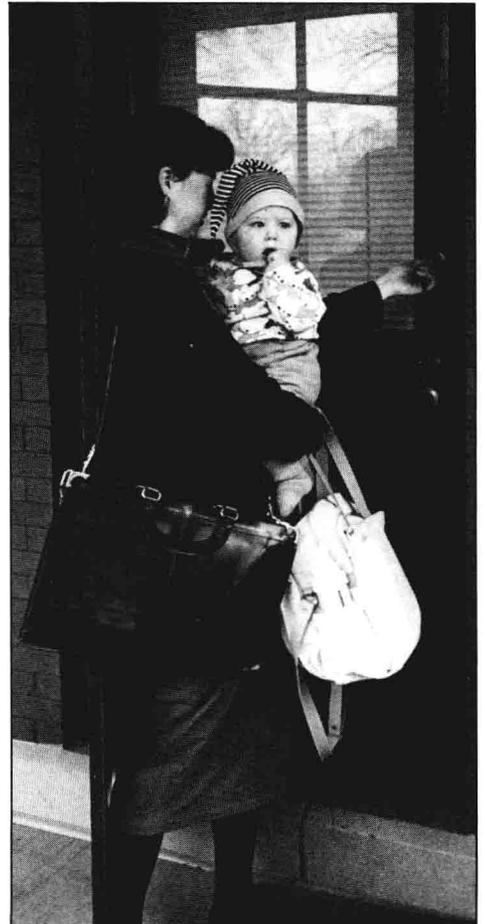
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CHAPTER 1

Interest and Issues

What's All the Fuss About?



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As you read and study:

- Identify contemporary influences that create interest in early childhood education.
- Understand and use the terminology of early childhood education.
- Identify and describe types of early childhood education programs.
- Recognize the importance of the ecology of early childhood education.
- Analyze the influence of the concept of “the competent child” on child rearing and education.
- Consider influences that hurry, pressure, and encourage children to grow up too soon, too fast.
- Understand the need for public policy and how public policy is developed.
- Examine adults’ views of children and explain the implications these views have for rearing and educating children.
- Examine social, political, economic, and educational issues that influence child rearing, teaching, and policy development.
- Understand how the public’s desire for basic education influences early childhood education programs.
- Review the procedures for observing children and plan to apply and use the observational guidelines in your work with young children.

POPULARITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In 1965, with the beginning of the Head Start Program (see Chapter 10), early childhood education entered its modern period. Over the past three decades, the field of early childhood education has been enormously popular, and interest in the field is at an all-time high. For all early childhood professionals, the years that close the 20th century and act as a prelude to the 21st century promise to be exciting and challenging. Early childhood education will continue to be in the spotlight; however, the challenges, issues, and opportunities of the past quarter-century will little resemble those of the next decade. While all areas of early childhood education continue to capture attention, the area most in the spotlight is the period from conception to age six.

More parents—and the public at large—recognize the importance of the early years to learning and later development. Many upwardly mobile parents believe they have only a few years to set the course of their children's development and futures. They are extremely goal-directed about their careers and their children. Given this attitude, it is likely that the popularity of early childhood education and interest in the early years will continue unabated.

Problems such as child abuse and the numbers of children who live in poverty are perennial sources of controversy and concern, to which early childhood professionals continue to seek new solutions. Topics such as infant stimulation and infant child care have caught early educators' attention. The continual emergence of new ideas and issues relating to the education and care of young children and the quest to provide educationally and developmentally appropriate programs keeps the field in a state of disequilibrium by constantly challenging early childhood professionals to determine what is best for young children and their families.

CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE EARLY YEARS

Evidence of the public's interest in early childhood education is all around us. The April 17, 1989, cover story of *Newsweek* was devoted to "How Kids Learn." The article emphasized how children learn through play and self-discovery and generally won the praise of early childhood professionals, who applauded it as a vindication of their beliefs that parents and public school educators should not rush young children into early academics.

Daily newspapers also provide ample evidence of the nation's interest in young children. These are a few newspaper headlines that called attention to stories and articles about young children and their parents.

"Congress Shows Signs of Spending to Fight Infant Deaths" (*The New York Times*, May 21, 1989)

"Infant IQ Pigeonholing" (*The Christian Science Monitor*, May 24, 1989)

"Infant Mortality: A National Disgrace; Each Child Has A Right To Adequate Prenatal Care" (*The Los Angeles Times*, April 21, 1989)

"Parents Cautioned on Low-fat Baby Diets" (*The Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1989)

"U.S. and States Faulted on Child Care" (*The New York Times*, January 9, 1990)

“A Primary School Tests for Drugs: Program at Catholic Academy in Chicago May Be a First” (*The New York Times*, January 21, 1990)

“A Test for AIDS Infection in Newborns” (*The New York Times*, June 22, 1989)

“Tiny Miracles Become Huge Public Health Problem” (*The New York Times*, February 19, 1989)

Mass media magazines such as *First*, designed to address parenting and other questions asked by contemporary adults, *Working Mother*, which provides child-rearing and work-related information, and *Parenting* help quench the insatiable desire of parents and the public for information about child care and rearing. Many hospitals have jumped on the bandwagon, and they too are providing parent-oriented publications to meet parents' needs and longing for information.

PARENTS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

More parents have more disposable income and are willing to spend it on enriching their and their children's lives. Parents enroll themselves and their infants and toddlers in self-improvement programs promoted as physically and cognitively stimulating. Courses designed for expectant parents, new parents, and harried parents are now a standard part of the curriculum of many community colleges and schools. During one semester at a local community college, parents could select from these courses:



As more women enter the work force, quality child care becomes an even greater necessity. Caregivers who provide quality child care help assure that children will have an appropriate foundation for later life and learning.

Parent/Infant Enrichment, Play Activities with the Preschool Child, Discipline Strategies That Work, Movement and Play Activities, Creative Learning-Storytelling/Drama, Toilet Learning, Choosing a Preschool for Your Child, Building Your Child's Self-esteem, and Developmental Screening for Infants. Many of the courses required registration of both parents and their young children!

Parent groups discuss prevention of child abuse; how to reduce stress in children's lives; the demise of childhood; how to nurture in the nuclear age; ways to develop curricula for peace; how to extend more rights to children; and how to parent in these increasingly stressful and permissive times.

Stimulation/enrichment programs help popularize the importance of the very early years. Infant-parent stimulation programs catch the fancy and serve the needs of young parents, especially upwardly mobile parents. They want "the best" for their children and are willing to spend time, effort, and money to see that they get the best. This, in turn, makes it possible for early childhood educators to address the importance of the early years. It also creates a climate of acceptance for very early education and an arena in which early childhood educators are heard. Infant stimulation programs stimulate more than infants.

STATE INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

All the states of the nation are taking a lead in developing programs for young children. State initiative is stimulated by several factors. One is the continuing federal cuts in funds for early childhood and other human services programs. As federal dollars dry up, states are responding by initiating programs of their own, funded from many sources—from lottery monies to taxes on commodities such as cigarettes.

Second, instead of giving monies directly to specific programs, federal monies are consolidated into what are known as "block grants"—sums of money given to states to provide services according to broad general guidelines. In essence, the states control how the money is spent and the nature of the programs funded, not the federal government. As federal support for early education continues to decline, the states continue to fund replacement, alternative, and substitute programs. This involvement will grow and strengthen as the states make greater commitments to child care and early education programs, especially for children from low-income families. Over 31 states have appropriated monies for prekindergarten programs to serve at-risk four-year-old children¹. This trend will continue and accelerate. With direct funding comes control. When agencies contribute funding for programs, they also help determine the direction the programs will take, the policies that govern them, and what children and families they will serve.

CORPORATE DISSATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLING

U.S. corporations are increasingly dissatisfied with the products of the nation's schools. Many companies find that they must spend millions of dollars teaching potential employees to read and write. Faced with the prospect of an undereducated and untrained work force, corporations are stepping in to assist the public schools. In addition to providing money and expertise, corporations are pressuring schools to