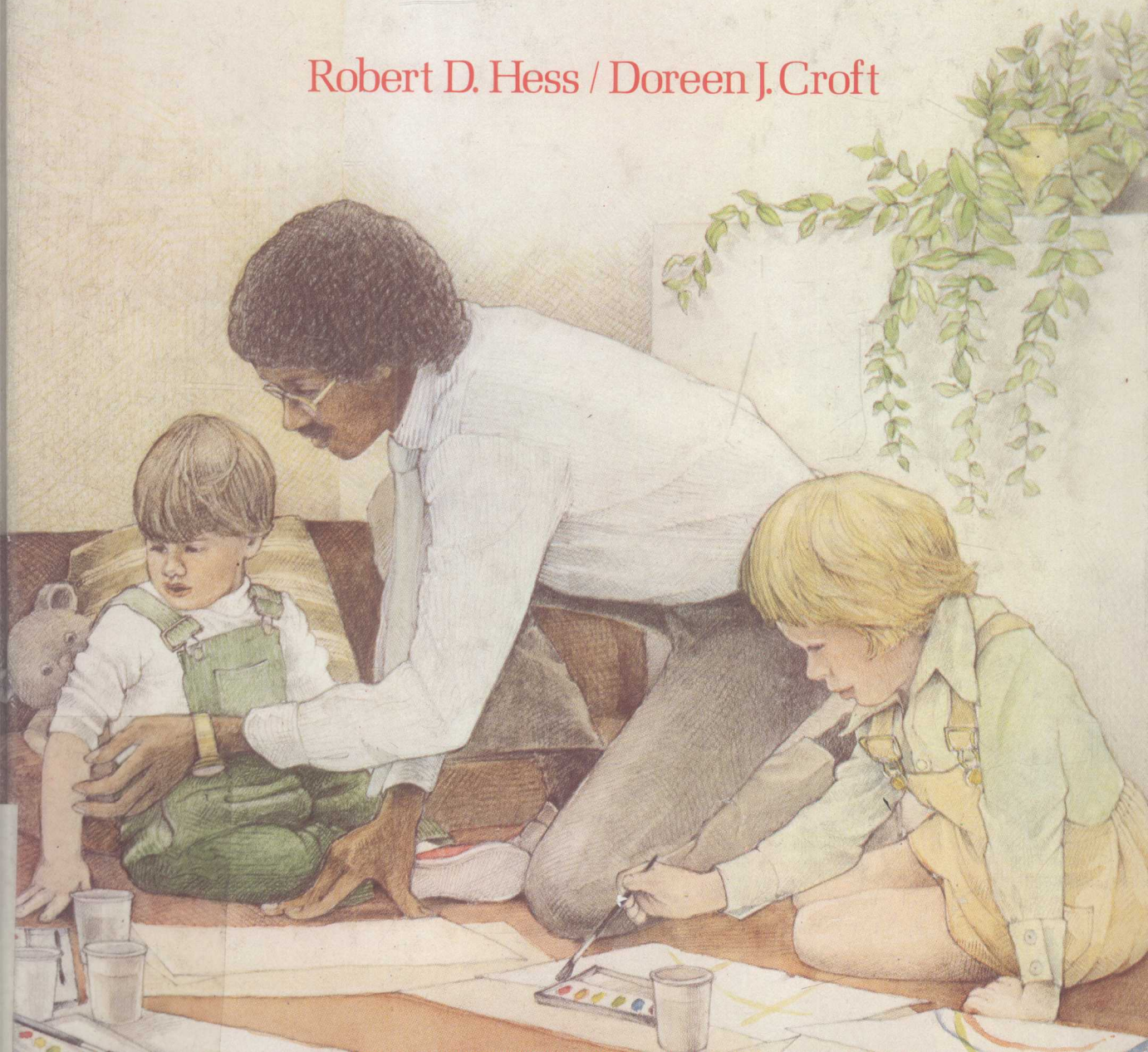


# TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

THIRD EDITION

Robert D. Hess / Doreen J. Croft



# TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

*Illustrations for the cover and the text by Marcia R. Smith*

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## PREFACE

The third edition of *Teachers of Young Children* is an introductory text for students who are preparing to work in the field of early education and child care. It is intended to provide knowledge about characteristics of children during the preschool years, to describe the curriculum elements that are used in preschool programs, and to offer information and suggestions about career development in the field.

### ORGANIZATION

Twenty-five chapters are organized into eight parts: "The Expanding Field of Early Education and Child Care," "Preparing to Teach in the Classroom," "Health and Safety in the Preschool," "Helping Children Learn," "Gathering and Using Data about Children and Their Families," "The Family and the Preschool," "Administration of Preschools," and "Some Personal Matters." A prologue opens each part, outlining the major themes of the chapters that follow. The style of the prologues is more informal and personal, and because they are directed to the individual reader, they should not be overlooked in reading assignments.

Each chapter begins with an outline of the major topics covered. The chapters include boxed inserts that offer specific suggestions for classroom teaching, summaries of pertinent studies, and expanded coverage of selected topics discussed in the text. The material in each chapter covers matters that concern the teacher as a professional who is developing a career; knowledge about children, the field, and the curriculum that is needed to become a competent professional; and the application of such knowledge in specific classroom situations.

### AUDIENCE AND POINT OF VIEW

The text is written for the beginning student in the field—typically an undergraduate in a four-year or community college—although some

chapters may be more useful in more specialized courses. Examples of situations that the teacher will meet are included; specific points are identified, especially in suggesting how the material may be used in interacting with parents, children, and staff members. Marginal notes offer excerpts of opinions and perspectives that the student may encounter as well as comments that illustrate, sometimes by contrast, the material in the chapter. The writing style of the text is generally informal, but a glossary at the end of the book defines terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers.

The perspective of the book is eclectic but with sympathetic consideration of a cognitive developmental slant. We see theories, programs, and techniques as tools to use in the classroom, not as doctrines to be promoted or defended.

### PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES

Several features of the third edition are intended to make the material useful for the beginning student. There is a strong orientation toward classroom practice and research. We have made relevant studies more practical by suggesting applications of the material for classroom use. Illustrations and examples are included to show how principles in the field can be applied in a given situation.

The text reflects a concern with both early education and child care. The field is diverse, but there is a great deal of overlap in the types of competence needed in these two major areas. The materials are prepared to include both child care and educational settings.

The text also focuses on career development. Some students who use this book will soon seek careers in early education and child care. The final part may hold special interest for the young professional. The topics discussed in that section include getting a job, dealing with stress and burn-out, and evaluating personal growth in the early stages of a career.

The third edition includes more practical suggestions for using knowledge about children in designing the curriculum. The companion volume, *An Activities Handbook for Teachers of Young Children*, presents many specific ideas about how to help children learn. *Teachers of Young Children* expands on those ideas and also discusses principles of classroom management, administration of preschools, and collaboration with parents to teach them to be effective in working with young children.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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**R.D.H.**

**D.J.C.**

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# TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN



# PART ONE

# THE EXPANDING FIELD OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

**A PROLOGUE** You probably have some personal reasons for reading *Teachers of Young Children*. You may be thinking seriously of entering the field, or you may simply be curious about child care. Perhaps you have been told that you are good with children. Maybe you're a homemaker who wants to return to the labor market or a young man who believes that child care is the responsibility of both men and women. Whatever your reasons, you will see the field through the lens of your own experience and needs.

Several questions may come to mind as you approach the study of early childhood education. Foremost among them may be, "Should I choose a career in early education?" Although your present motives are a good base on which to form your answer, your ideas are likely to change as you learn more about young children, the various kinds of jobs that will be available, and the conditions under which you will work. The field is diverse and challenging, and new career options will appear as your training continues.

One chapter in the text explores the question, "Is child care good for children?"; you may also ask, "Is child care good for me?" Perhaps you should also ask, "Will I be good for child care?" If you enter the field of early education, you should be prepared to contribute. *Teachers of Young Children* is intended to help you prepare to offer the field the professional competence and skills that are needed.

In order to help you begin to answer the questions you may have, Part

One provides some background on the history of child care, the need for early education in this society, and the growth of the field.

Imagine your situation five years in the future. You will have completed your training and gained experience. You will be making decisions about the role you want to play in the field. What images come to mind? Will you be a teacher in a large day care center? Serve as a curriculum coordinator in a multicultural school district? You might see yourself directing a chain of franchised preschools, or operating a day care home with a small group of children. These goals are within reach. They take planning, work, and determination. They are rarely achieved through luck. The knowledge now available makes it possible for you to develop basic skills that will help you deal effectively with young children.

In our society, few adults are professionally trained to work with young children. Those who are, hold a special place. If early education is your choice, your influence will reach far into the future.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE NEED FOR CHILD CARE

### A GLIMPSE AT HISTORY

Early Forms of Preschool Education

Early Education as Social Reform

Nursery Schools

Origins of Child Care in the United States

### RECENT GROWTH OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

The Demand for Early Education

The Need for Child Care

## A GLIMPSE AT HISTORY

Every weekday morning, hundreds of thousands of parents leave their young children in the care of relatives, friends, preschools, day care centers, or day care homes. The proportion of parents who rely on others to care for their children has grown rapidly. The number of day care centers and day care homes tripled between 1967 and 1975, from 35,000 to 116,000. During the same period, the proportion of children enrolled in preschool programs increased more than 50 percent (Snapper and Ohms, 1977).

Child care and early education constitute a large and growing industry. How did it begin? Why is it growing so rapidly?

### Early Forms of Preschool Education

The preschool movement began more than three hundred years ago. In 1657, a Czech named Comenius published a book, *The Great Didactic*, in which he argued that the first schooling should be at home—a sort of “School of the Mother’s Knee”—where, during the first six years of life, children would be taught by their mothers so that when they reached school age they possessed simple facts and skills that prepared them for more formal learning. A year later, Comenius published a picture book for children to supplement a course of study he had prepared twenty years before. His curriculum covered names of parts of the body, colors, plants, and animals, as well as religious and moral training.

About 150 years later, a Swiss educator, Johann H. Pestalozzi, created preschools for young children. His interest in early schooling came from a deep love for children and a concern that their spirit and growth were threatened by factories, industrialized cities, and neglect by working parents. In 1801 he wrote *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, in which he described his philosophy and methods. Simple and perceptive, they are still applicable. Children were taught to observe things around them—the number of panes in a window, the number of steps in a stairway, and specific things in the natural world. Pestalozzi believed such attentiveness would lead to heightened awareness in a child, promoting speech and academic skills (Braun and Edwards, 1972).

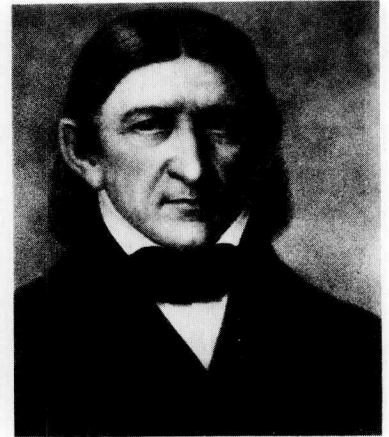
In 1842, one of Pestalozzi’s students, a German, Frederick Froebel, founded the *kindergarten*, or “children’s garden.” The garden was intended as a sanctuary for children, where the pressures of the family and the school could not enter. Froebel used “gifts” of soft felt balls, blocks, and sticks and various activities such as painting, sewing, paper cutting, marching, dancing, and singing. School work in the form of classroom materials, books, writing or reading exercises was forbidden; the focus was on play. The teacher, through careful supervision, helped the child combine play and



John Amos Comenius (1592–1670). Czech educator who wrote first text using pictures for teaching children.



Johann H. Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Swiss educational reformer who emphasized use of objects at early age to develop powers of observation and reasoning.



Frederick Froebel (1782–1852), German educator who devised a system of educational games for children and founded the kindergarten.

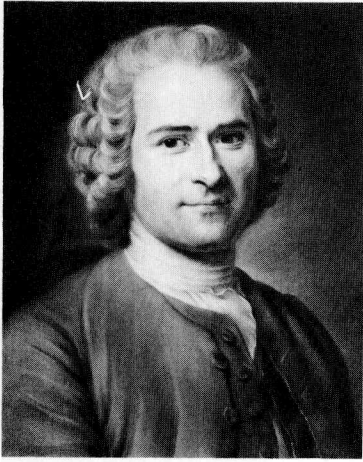
work. According to Froebel, the work of young children was play; it was from play that they were to learn (Braun and Edwards, 1972).

In the United States, the kindergarten movement grew as the result of the efforts of Elizabeth Peabody who started the first private English-speaking kindergarten in Boston in 1860. (The first kindergarten was actually started by Mrs. Carl Schurtz in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1855. A student of Froebel, Mrs. Schurtz opened the school in her home mainly for her own children.) Young children, as viewed by Elizabeth Peabody, were self-centered, aware of their senses and experiences. Left at home, the child could become selfish. The kindergarten could provide a place where this early concentration on the self would be balanced by learning to take a place in a group.

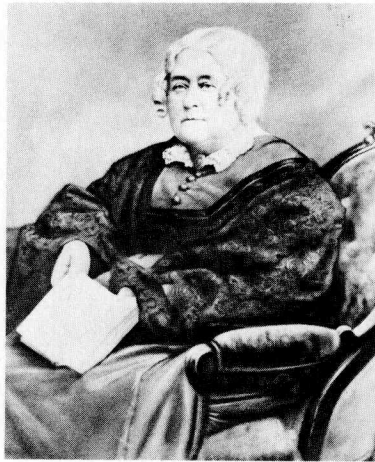
### Early Education as Social Reform

Initially, the first kindergartens were expensive and were used primarily by affluent families. In both Europe and the United States, however, they came to be seen as a way of helping children escape the evils of the industrial age.

At the turn of the century, a major force in early childhood education emerged in the slums of Rome. Maria Montessori, a feminist and the first woman to earn a degree in medicine in Italy, began her work with retarded children as an intern at the University of Rome. She developed materials and methods suitable for teaching these children, and in 1907 she was asked to



Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), French philosopher who believed education should start at birth and continue through the twenty-fifth year.



Elizabeth Peabody (1804–1894), American educator who emphasized Froebel's theories in championing the cause of kindergartens in the United States.



Maria Montessori (1870–1952), Italian physician who created instructional materials that used motion and manipulation to train the senses.

organize a school in a tenement in Rome. Ironically, the motivation for the school sprang from the desire of the Roman Association of Good Building to prevent children from vandalizing the tenements while their parents were away at work. Montessori opened the *Casa dei bambini* for children between the ages of two and one-half and seven, with hours from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Braun and Edwards, 1972). Montessori's genius was her ability to design materials for training. She created materials that were self-administered and self-correcting and that used motion and manipulation to train the senses. She wanted materials to be inherently interesting, simple, and thoroughly comprehensible to the teacher. Although the movement she founded is criticized by some as insufficiently oriented toward social and linguistic development, Montessori's work continues to have significant impact on the field (Hunt, 1964).

Underprivileged children also received attention in the United States. About twenty years after Elizabeth Peabody established her kindergarten in Boston, Kate Douglas Wiggin, author of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, became excited over the prospect of planting one of the "children's gardens" in the ghettos of San Francisco for nurturing children who were underfed, neglected, and vulnerable. She started a settlement kindergarten in the early 1870s.

In this way, kindergartens and, later, preschools were used as instruments for social reform. They provided special educational and nurturing climates for children from low-income backgrounds who were thought to have special

Kindergartens were originally supported by private foundations. They were first included in public schools in St. Louis in 1873.

needs (Lazerson, 1970). Schools have been used for such social goals and purposes for a long time and are still seen as routes to social improvement.

### Nursery Schools

Nursery schools appeared in the United States much later than kindergartens. The influence of Montessori led to the establishment of the first nursery school in New York City in 1915, under the auspices of the Child Education Foundation. That same year, a group of faculty wives at the University of Chicago organized a cooperative preschool.

In 1919, Caroline Pratt founded a nursery school in New York City under the direction of the Bureau of Educational Experiments. This school eventually became a demonstration center for the Bank Street College of Education. Teachers College of Columbia University began another school in 1921. The Merrill Palmer Institute organized a nursery school in Detroit in 1922 to provide "a laboratory for training young women in child care" (Braun and Edwards, 1972). Nursery schools gained immediate popularity. Within a few short years, more than two hundred schools were established (Davis, 1932).

The first organization of nursery schools was sparked by Patty Smith Hill in a meeting at Teachers College in 1925. This organization, the National Association for Nursery Education, later became the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

### Origins of Child Care in the United States

In contrast to kindergartens and nursery schools, which were established for the benefit of the child, child care has been oriented toward the needs of working adults. In the 1850s, for example, child care was provided for employed mothers, especially those who had been deserted or widowed. The first facilities were set up in 1854 and by 1897 there were 175. During World War I, child care centers were established to accommodate children of women who were employed to assist in the war effort (Pidgion, 1953). During the depression of the 1930s, child care centers were established as part of the Work Projects Administration (WPA) to serve a dual purpose: to furnish day care for children of working parents and to provide jobs for unemployed teachers (Rothman, 1973). Women were recruited during World War II to work in factories and offices to replace men who were called for active military service. Through federal funds authorized by the Lanham Act of 1940, child care centers were established to serve working women. Industries sometimes provided their own baby-sitting and day care services. Many of these child care centers disappeared after the war when men replaced

"I worked in a shipyard child care center in 1942, and I still recall having the full responsibility for eighteen children, ages two and one-half to six. Sometimes, the best I could do was to let a child hang on to part of my skirt and follow me around while I attended to the needs of the children as best I could."

*Teacher*