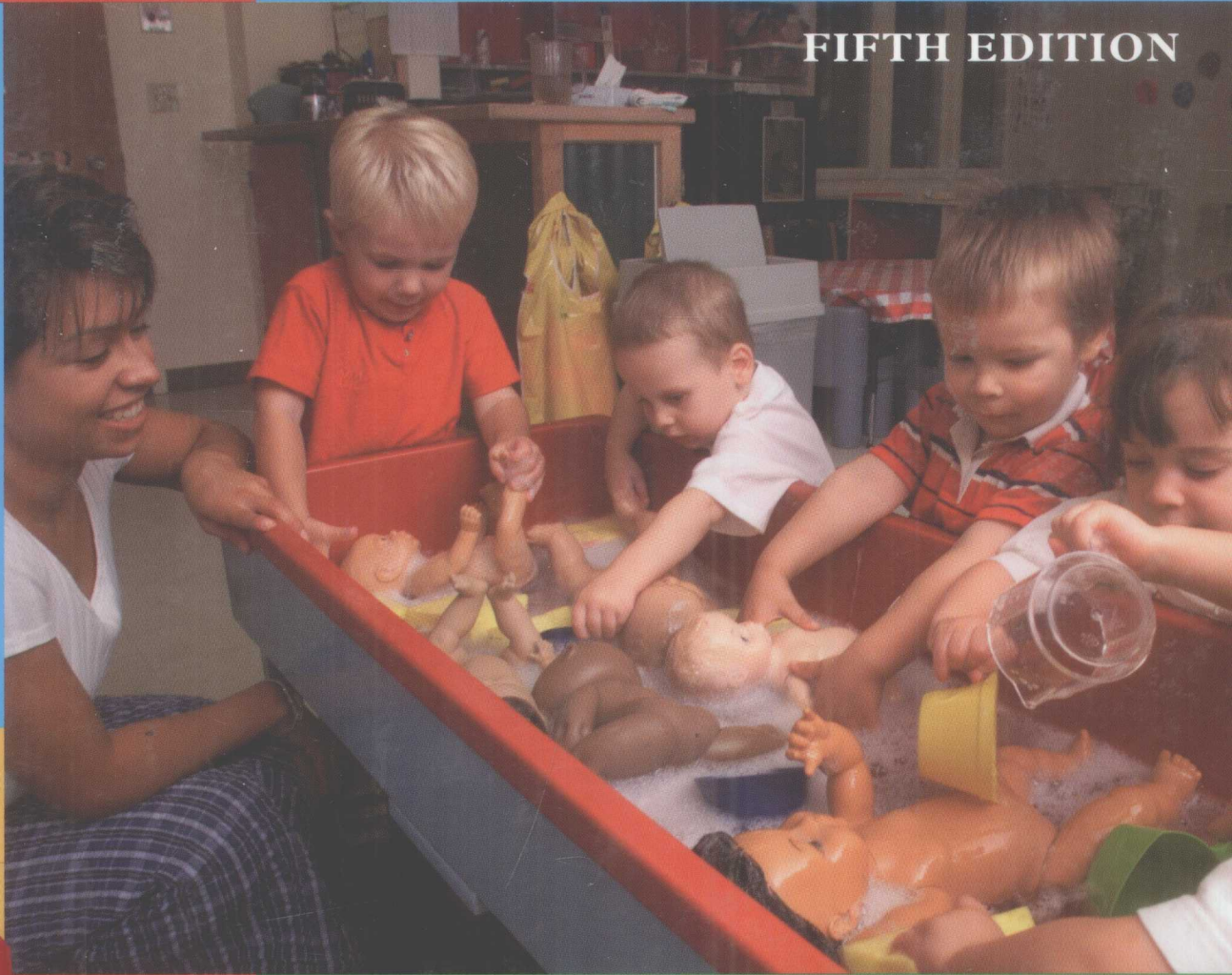


# *Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers*

FIFTH EDITION



*Janet Gonzalez-Mena*  
*Dianne Widmeyer Eyer*

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**Janet Gonzalez-Mena**

*Napa Valley College*

**Dianne Widmeyer Eyer**

*Cañada College*



Mayfield Publishing Company  
Mountain View, California  
London • Toronto

## *To Magda Gerber*

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# Preface

The field of early education is constantly changing. Consider, for example, the sleeping positions of newborns. For years, pediatricians have told parents to put babies to sleep on their stomachs. The theory was that if babies were placed on their backs they might vomit and choke. Recent research has changed that view, however. It has been shown that laying babies on their stomachs increases their risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS or crib death). Medical experts now say that babies should sleep on their backs or sides. Luckily, this book was one step ahead of medical research in this area.

The philosophy behind this text is based on the philosophy of Magda Gerber, an expert in infant care, who is originally from Hungary but now resides in Los Angeles. Gerber has always advocated putting babies down on their backs. We didn't highlight that fact in the first three editions of this book because it went against the official advice of the American Pediatric Association. However, we didn't support the advice to put babies on their stomachs either, so we just quietly left it out.

An important feature of any textbook is to stay current with the issues. Through regular updating, this book has managed to keep current without diluting its main philosophy, which is to record recent research but also to maintain a focus on practical application.

Perhaps the most important feature of the book is the consistency with which it outlines well-established practices designed to promote children's total well-being, including physical growth and development, mental health, emotional stability, and human relationships. Research on brain development in animals once again threatens to push the field in the direction of simplistic prepackaged training programs that focus on infant stimulation. This book is designed to counterbalance one-sided treatments that do not consider all facets of a child's development. To that end, we wove implications of the latest brain research into every chapter!

Also, we continue to focus on several issues raised by the Child and Family Studies training team at the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research (particularly Dr. J. Ronald Lally, Dr. Peter Mangione, and Sheila Signer, as well as two experts in infant care at the California Department of Education: Janet Poole and Mary Smithberger). They have drawn attention to the importance that sensitive care and proper program planning have on the identity formation in infants and toddlers. The factors that influence identity formation include culturally sensitive caregiving, continuity of care, group size, and primary caregiving systems.

As before, we are concerned about the inclusion of infants and toddlers with special needs in child care and early education programs. Caregivers need to understand how to care for children with all kinds of needs, because children with disabilities and atypical development are entering child care at a greater rate than ever before. The goal is to place all children in “natural environments,” which mean that those with special needs will be in the same environments as their typically developing peers. So this book’s focus on inclusion is timely and useful. The skills and sensitivity emphasized here can help caregivers make a difference in the development of all children, including those with special needs.

Responding to diversity is a necessity, and we’ve focused more on cultural differences in this edition, even though we still present a cohesive philosophy without confusing it with multiple views on each and every subject.

This book has always been about curriculum in infant-toddler programs, even though that word isn’t in the title. Today as more and more people in the field are looking for clear and easy answers, they are turning to books that have the word curriculum in the title. We’ve tried to explain even more strongly that this book is a curriculum—it’s a respectful and responsive curriculum based on relationships.

Gender equity is mentioned frequently in this book. We point out the pitfalls of gender role stereotyping and ask the reader to consider what subtle messages adults give that narrow rather than expand children’s views of appropriate gender behavior.

Bilingualism is promoted in the text. An important part of caregiver training is learning to understand, acknowledge, and respond to language and cultural differences. Knowing how to promote home language is also important.

A unique feature of this book is the focus on the reader’s personal experience. Regularly throughout the book, questions are asked that require self-examination. Only through understanding ourselves can we understand infants and toddlers. Sensitivity is an important qualification for anyone who works with very young children, because the children are still mostly in the preverbal state. Self-examination on the part of the adult is an important key to increased sensitivity.

The book is divided into three parts and is organized in a unique way. Instead of starting with standard child development information and its practical application, part 1 focuses on the caregiver's actions and relationships with the children. By starting with the *interactive* aspect of caregiving, we highlight the philosophy from the beginning pages of the book. Part 1 is an explanation of how the caregivers' actions and interactions with the children make up the curriculum in infant-toddler programs, both center based and in family day care.

Part 2 presents basic child development information along with the curriculum implications of that information. Part 2 reflects the basic philosophy found throughout the book.

Part 3 looks at additional infant-toddler child-care components and includes environments as well as adult-adult relationships. These are examined from a programmatic point of view in both center and family child care settings.

Appendix A is a checklist for determining quality in infant-toddler programs. Appendix B includes an environmental chart that combines the information from all three parts into one concise but comprehensive chart designed for practical use in program design and implementation. The chart tells you what to do when, and with what, based on infants' and toddlers' specific stage-related developmental needs. Appendix C contains a short paper that explains the issue of curriculum and lesson plans. Written by Dr. J. Ronald Lally of WestEd's Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers, this paper can relieve the minds of caregivers who are mandated to write lesson plans. Appendix D gives a sample set of guiding principles for working in partnership with parents. The principles used as examples are from the Parent Services Project (P.S.P.), headed by Lisa Lee and Ethel Seiderman.

Although designed for preservice training of child care workers and family child-care providers who work with children under three years of age, the book has also been useful for other purposes, such as parent education and in-service training.

The book has been used as a text for students in the classroom as well as an on-the-job training tool by community college and four-year college teachers, public health nurses, social workers, counselors, program directors, training coordinators, parent educators, high school child development teachers, and teachers in teen parent programs.

The overall goal of the book is to help readers gain knowledge and be able to apply that knowledge while exploring and understanding their own experience as it relates to the subject matter. As readers gain understanding, they also develop a perspective that helps them find their own unique ways of relating to the children they will care for. This approach increases the reader's confidence in his or her ability to relate to very young children in whole and healthy ways.

We wish to thank those who reviewed the manuscript: Cheryl Dreska, Kishwaukee College; Rebecca Marine, Cerritos College; Tisha Rivera, California State University, Los Angeles; Linda H. Ruhmann, San Antonio College; and Sandra Tucker, Palomar College.

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# Introduction

This new edition of *Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers* comes at a time when interest in infants is booming. New information from brain research is drawing everybody's attention to the early years: parents, scientists, educators, policy makers, even entertainers like Rob Reiner, who put on a national campaign to draw attention to the importance of a good start in infancy. In addition, with welfare reform in full swing, infants are coming into child care in far greater numbers than ever before. Early Head Start is making a difference too. Across the United States programs are coming into being with the goal of strengthening families' abilities to relate to and care for their infants. Never before in the experience of the two authors has there been such a widespread interest in babies. It's as if a whole nation has opened its eyes and discovered that babies are not just cute little blobs but full human beings with lots of capabilities and needs. We're trying hard not to say "We told you so!"

The challenge now is to create programs that are good for infants and toddlers and to train caregivers to work in such programs. Poor-quality care harms children. We must ensure that every child in this nation has good-quality care. That means increased attention and resources! It also means awareness of the need to improve salary and status issues for caregivers. The turnover rate is high, so if infants and toddlers are to make connections and feel at home and comfortable in child care, we have to work hard as a society to find ways to keep caregivers happy in their jobs so they won't leave.

This book is part of the picture of improving child care in that it can support the skill development and knowledge acquisition that caregivers need to work successfully and sensitively in the field.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The authors of this text became concerned with some of the questions relating to the quality and training in the mid-1970s while teaching child and infant development at Cañada College in Redwood City, California. Janet Gonzalez-Mena became an intern in Magda Gerber and Dr. Tom Forrest's program, the Demonstration Infant Program (now called Resources for Infant Educators—R.I.E.), where she learned the philosophy on which this book is based.<sup>1</sup> Dianne Widmeyer Eyer completed a second master's degree in special education and developed curriculum in early childhood special education, with a sensitivity toward quality intervention for young children with disabilities.

A few years later both authors became more involved with family child care. As Director of Child Care Services for Family Service Agency in San Mateo County, California, Janet supervised a network of family child-care homes that served infants and toddlers (as well as preschoolers). Under her direction, the agency opened a new infant center and also created a pilot program of therapeutic child care for abused and neglected infants and toddlers. Dianne worked with the Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County to develop a Certificate Training Program for Family Child Care Providers at Cañada College. This curriculum also models the Gerber philosophy of respect and responsiveness for infant-toddler care. Janet went on to teach at Napa Valley College until she retired from there in 1998. Today Janet continues to educate and train infant-toddler caregivers in a variety of settings. She is currently a visiting faculty member for Pacific Oaks College in northern California and also works with WestEd's Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers training trainers. She also continues to write articles and books. Dianne continues to be very involved in her role as the Early Childhood–Child Development Program Coordinator at Cañada College. She recently completed a new curriculum specialization in Family Support, working in collaboration with Ethel Seiderman, the director of Parent Services Project, Inc. This specialization is the first of its kind in California. Dianne is also a Professional Growth Adviser for the California Child Development Permit.

## SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE NEW EDITION

The new brain research and its implications for infant-toddler care are to be found in nearly every chapter. We didn't avoid the controversy either, which is just beginning to brew as we finish up this revision. We point out myths that are a natural consequence of any scientific breakthrough. We also point out the pitfalls of misinterpreting the implications for infants and toddlers.

Special needs have always been a concern of ours, and they become even more important in this edition as many more infant-toddler programs will be taking in children who formerly might have been rejected from child care. Too often in the past someone decided arbitrarily it would be too hard to meet

the special needs of some children. The amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which took effect in 1998, make it illegal to exclude children with disabilities from child care unless there is proof that the child's needs cannot be met.

Sensitivity to parents and to diversity continues to be an interest of ours. We've expanded our attention to cultural differences, even though we still haven't gone all the way to fully incorporate diversity in this text. Because we are trying to present a cohesive philosophy, we don't want to distract the reader with widely varying views. The more we understand about cultural differences, the more we appreciate the numbers of areas of disagreement about infants and toddlers—who they are and what they need. Those arguments and disagreements are beyond the scope of this book, but they can be found in Janet's *Multicultural Issues in Child Care*, a suggested companion text for this one.

If caregivers work in programs in which parents sign up because of the particular philosophy of the program, it's important that the program stick to the philosophy as advertised. But many times parents have little choice about where to place their infant or toddler in child care. They find themselves in a program in which the philosophy is different from what they believe in and want for their children. In that case it is important to be sensitive to the needs and goals of those parents. The program doesn't have to give up its philosophy, but it must recognize and respond to differing perspectives. When dissonance occurs, communication skills are called for, along with some time and attention to solving the problems that can arise. When caregivers put themselves in the parents' shoes, they are better caregivers for that family's children.

We listened to reviewers who worried we might have focused too much on center-based care and not enough on family child care. We revised with that in mind, looking at where we might have neglected family child care providers. In the physical environment chapter we added a section on working with infants and toddlers as part of a mixed age group in a family child care home.

Curriculum and lesson plans are a major issue for some caregivers who are being asked to put things in writing. We tried even harder to explain our all-inclusive concept of curriculum that centers on connections and relationships. To put it briefly, curriculum has to do with respecting and responding to each child's needs in warm and sensitive ways that promote attachment and development. We also included in the appendix a short paper, written by Dr. J. Ronald Lally of WestEd's Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers, which explains the issue of curriculum. Many directors and caregivers struggle with what it means to "educate" a child under three. The new brain research has made this an even bigger question. Too many people are still looking to school-type models and creating adult-directed "cognitive" games and activities. Even child-directed activities, often the major focus of adult attention, can be a disservice to infants and toddlers. When adults put a good deal of effort into planning for and implementing "activities," they take attention away from the real prime times for learning. Instead of focusing on relationships, they

focus on gathering materials, setting up, and cleaning up. The important learning comes in one-to-one interactions with infants and toddlers that occur during caregiving times and between the planned activities. To the uninitiated, very little that naturally occurs in an infant center or even a toddler program looks educational. One of the purposes of this book is to help the reader better articulate to the uninitiated how infant-toddler care is much more than just custodial care but is truly educational as well.

## THEORY VERSUS PRACTICE AND THE PROBLEM OF ANALYSIS PARALYSIS

Knowing *about* is different from knowing *how to*. Knowing about means learning theory. Knowing how to puts theory into action. We purposely organized this book to emphasize action because we know that even people with considerable understanding of infants and toddlers have trouble acting on that understanding unless they have also learned to *apply* theory. Knowledge does not necessarily build skill.

Caregivers who have knowledge but lack confidence in their ability to use it may suffer from “analysis paralysis,” which prevents caregivers from making quick decisions, from stating their feelings clearly, and from taking needed action.<sup>2</sup> A common pattern when analysis paralysis strikes is inaction, then indecision, then overemotional or otherwise inappropriate reaction, followed by more inaction. Take for example an inexperienced caregiver in an infant-toddler center who stands by, watching a toddler throwing sand in the air, unsure whether the child’s obvious enjoyment of this new accomplishment is more important than the possibility of getting sand in her (or someone else’s) eyes. The caregiver may hang back, doing nothing for a time, then hesitantly suggest that the child stop, but do nothing when the child continues. She may say or do nothing until the conflict within grows strong enough to cause another reaction. This time she may laugh and play with the child, enjoying with her the pleasure of her new discovery, until sand gets in someone’s eyes, at which time the caregiver may angrily remind the child that she told her to stop a long time ago.

When adults have analysis paralysis and either cannot react or react inconsistently, infants cannot learn to predict what will happen as the result of their own actions. This learning to predict what effect they have on the world is the primary accomplishment of infants in early life. Depriving them of this learning affects their development.

Because of internal conflicts, adults may put up with behavior that bothers them. Infants and toddlers can sense adult conflicts. They then continue with behavior that adults disapprove of—testing to see what will happen. They get no clear message about the approved way to behave or about the effects of their behavior.

## A PHILOSOPHY OF RESPECT

As in the first edition, *Infancy and Caregiving*, respect is the foundation of the philosophy on which this book is built. Is respect different from kindness and warmth? The answer is yes. What does it mean to “respect” infants and toddlers? The answer to that question lies in the ten principles on which the book is based:

1. Involve infants and toddlers in things that concern them. Don't work around them or distract them to get the job done faster.
2. Invest in quality time, when you are totally available to individual infants and toddlers. Don't settle for supervising groups without focusing (more than just briefly) on individual children.
3. Learn each child's unique ways of communicating (cries, words, movements, gestures, facial expressions, body positions), and teach them yours. Don't underestimate children's ability to communicate even though their verbal language skills may be nonexistent or minimal.
4. Invest time and energy to build a total person (concentrate on the “whole child”). Don't focus on cognitive development alone or look at it as separate from total development.
5. Respect infants and toddlers as worthy people. Don't treat them as objects or cute little empty-headed people to be manipulated.
6. Be honest about your feelings around infants and toddlers. Don't pretend to feel something that you don't or not to feel something that you do.
7. Model the behavior you want to teach. Don't preach.
8. Recognize problems as learning opportunities, and let infants and toddlers try to solve their own. Don't rescue them, constantly make life easy for them, or try to protect them from all problems.
9. Build security by teaching trust. Don't teach distrust by being undependable or often inconsistent.
10. Be concerned about the *quality* of development in each stage. Don't rush infants and toddlers to reach developmental milestones.

These principles are shown in action throughout the book, especially in part 1. They are supported by the information on infant and toddler development in part 2. They underlie the information on programs in part 3.

## TERMINOLOGY

In this book the youngest children—those from newborn to walking—are called infants. The children who are walking (from about a year old) to two years are called young toddlers. Children from two to three are called older toddlers. Children from three to five are called preschoolers.

What to call the adults in this book was a concern. Adults in the teacher/caregiver role go by different titles, depending on where they work. Magda Gerber coined the term “educarers,” which she uses to call the people she trains to work with children under three. We decided to call the adults in this book “caregivers” to simplify matters and to emphasize the importance of “caring” in programs for the youngest children. The caregiver role incorporates that of teacher, educator, child rearer, and surrogate parent.

The message of this book is that infants and toddlers need attention to their physical and psychological needs; a relationship with someone they can trust; respect; a safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate environment; chances to interact with other infants and toddlers; and freedom to explore using all their senses. The purpose of this book is to show, in as visual a way as possible, just how all those elements fit together in a child care program.

### Notes

1. The original ideas and research for the philosophy came from Emmi Pikler, M.D., who has been known for her work not only in her native Hungary but also all over Europe and the United States.
2. As far as we know, the expression “analysis paralysis” was first used by Lilian Katz, professor of early childhood education at the University of Illinois.



