

# Becoming a Teacher of Young Children

Third Edition



Margaret Lay-Dopyera  
John Dopyera

Third Edition

98765432

Copyright © 1987, 1982, 1977 by Random House, Inc.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without permission in writing from the publisher. All inquiries should be addressed to Random House, Inc., 201 East 50th Street, New York, N. Y. 10022. Published in the United States by Random House, Inc., and simultaneously in Canada by Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Lay-Dopyera, Margaret.

Becoming a teacher of young children.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Education, Preschool. 2. Education, Primary.

3. Teaching. I. Dopyera, John E. II. Title.

LB1140.2.L358 1986 372'.21 86-20293

ISBN 0-394-36299-3

Manufactured in the United States of America

# **BECOMING A TEACHER OF YOUNG CHILDREN**

# BECOMING A TEACHER

***Third Edition***

Margaret Lay-Dopyera

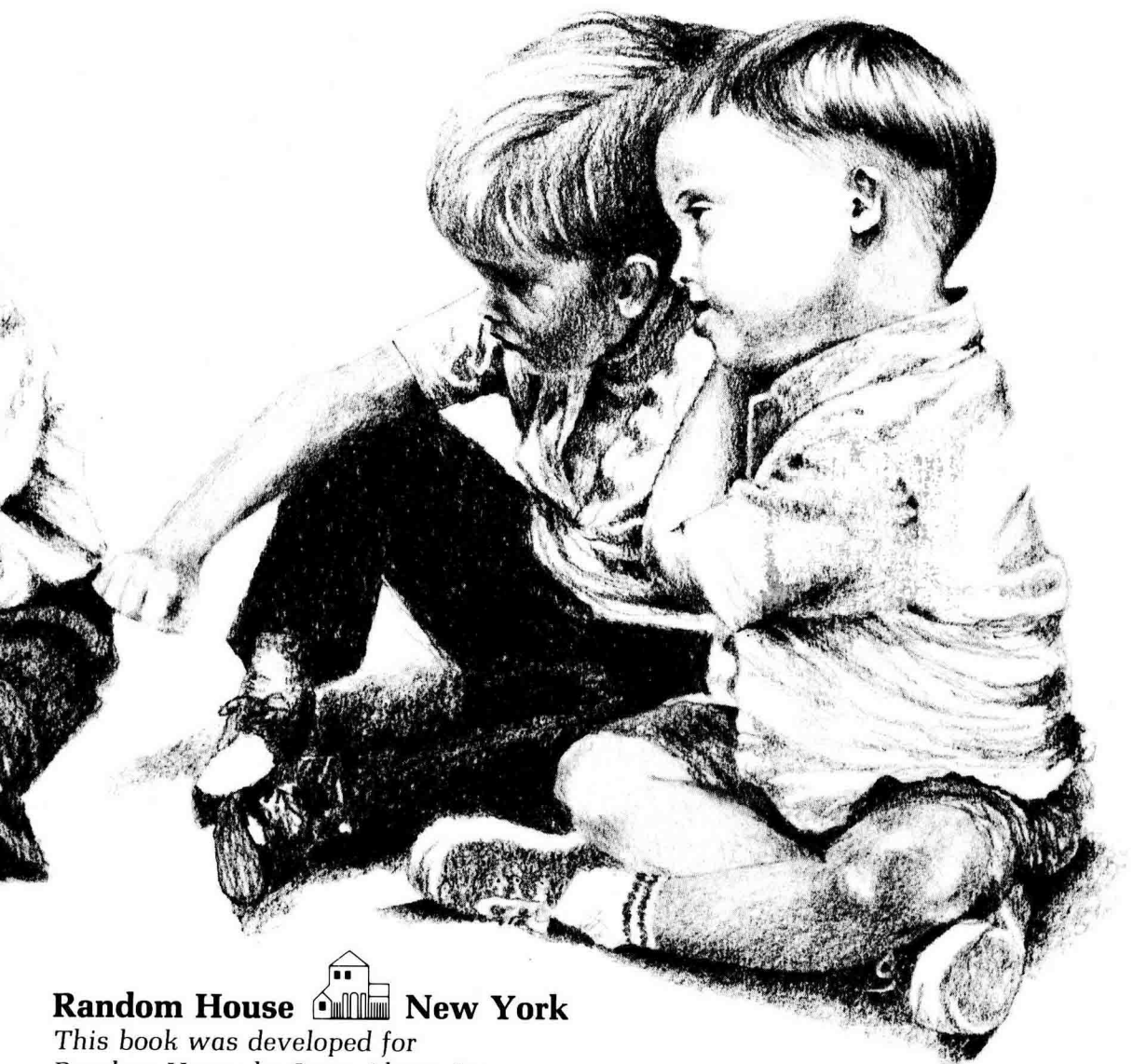
*Syracuse University*

John Dopyera

*Cumberland Hill Associates*



# OF YOUNG CHILDREN



**Random House**  **New York**

*This book was developed for  
Random House by Lane Akers, Inc.*

# Preface

Our intent in this book, as in prior editions, is to provide students with organizing concepts and materials that will enable them to assume considerable responsibility for their own preparation for teaching. It seems important that students have, from the beginning of their preparation, a comprehensive view of what is necessary to become a teacher. By proposing to the reader that the effective teacher has four attributes—commitment, sensitivity, resourcefulness, and organizational abilities—and by demonstrating how one can immediately begin to develop these qualities, we hope to make the task of teacher preparation comprehensible enough so as not to be overwhelming. Users of prior editions of *Becoming a Teacher of Young Children* will note some modifications. Although, as with the first editions, we continue to emphasize the four major characteristics we believe to be associated with effective teaching, we have dropped these as section organizers. This change was prompted by the inclusion of additional materials, each comprising a chapter, on historical perspectives, classroom management and discipline, teaching techniques and strategies, and communication. The revised section designations reflect the broader coverage. Mini-chapter inserts on mainstreaming, multicultural education, children and technology, and reading and writing are also presented in this edition. Some chapters from prior editions have been relocated. For example, you will find materials on theoretical orientations consolidated into Chapter 9 rather than spread across portions of several chapters. There are some other modifications in the placement of other content as well. Whereas, in prior editions, the development of resourcefulness was in the third section of the book and the development of organizational skills at the end, this has been reversed. The additions and relocations will make the book more flexible and functional. Nevertheless, we continue to emphasize throughout the text that the qualities of commitment, sensitivity, and organizational abilities and resourcefulness are critical to effective teaching regardless of the type of program or age level to which these qualities are applied.

We generally concur with the adage that “teachers teach as they were taught, not as they were taught to teach.” Therefore, throughout the text we attempt to model the principles that we value and that we wish to have emulated by teachers in their work with children. These include (1) active involvement in using, reacting to, or extending the information presented; (2) personalization of learning activities by responding to topics on the basis of one’s own experiences; (3) provision of activity options that allow learners to choose the most appropriate form of involvement for themselves and allow instructors to better understand the points of view of individual students.

For the greatest benefit to be derived from the text, it will be useful for students to exchange ideas with their peers—to compare others’ responses and experiences

with their own so that they may gain additional ideas and perspectives. In the Introduction we suggest ways in which readers may independently arrange these interchanges. We recommend, however, that some portions of course sessions be devoted to these experiences.

Our own substantial experiences in teacher education and related efforts continue to keep us aware of the many problems instructors face in preparing students for a teaching career. We hope that this text will help solve some of them.

# Acknowledgments

Many friends and associates contributed to this book. A major contributor is Martha Perske. Her sensitive drawings serve to enhance and extend the messages of this text. We are also indebted to our friends and colleagues for their willingness to let us use photographs they supplied.

We express sincere appreciation as well to those who contributed indirectly through what we have learned from them and used in our writing. That group includes our own mentors as well as the generations of students who have told us what they appreciated in our prior editions and what they yet wish for in such a text.

The work on this edition was facilitated by Madeline Rathbun's direct help on book tasks and able supervision of many nonbook activities that freed our attention for the revision efforts.

We wish particularly to express our appreciation for our editor, Lane Akers, who helped us create the first edition and who guided us in the revamping of this third one. He has been invariably insightful, patient, and supportive.



# Introduction

Teaching children from ages two through seven, the age span considered in this book, is challenging and difficult but invariably rewarding for those who carefully select and prepare for this career. Whether the teacher of young children works with a prekindergarten, kindergarten, or primary class in a public school or in a nursery school or child-care setting, the responsibilities are the same—to provide circumstances that support the development and learning of each child. The central objective of *Becoming a Teacher of Young Children* is to help you understand what you must do if you wish to prepare for this important professional role.

Section I of the textbook, entitled *Background*, provides you with information about the profession and what you can expect if you become a teacher. It presents both advantages and disadvantages of a career in early childhood education. There is also a chapter on the history of this field that gives you a glimpse of how the field has developed and of its current status. This section should help you begin thinking through your **commitment** to a career as a teacher of young children. Your own commitment to teaching can only be derived from realistic knowledge of yourself and of what you will be encountering in the teaching role.

**Sensitivity** to children's development and behavior is a necessary quality in an effective teacher. Only if a teacher can accurately assess what children feel, need, can do, and are learning to do is there any assurance that what is provided in the program will be appropriate for them. The function of Section II is (1) to increase your awareness of how various theorists and researchers view child behavior and development, (2) to develop your ability to observe and describe children's feelings, interests, and abilities, and (3) to increase your understanding of how such observations can be used to guide your program decision making.

In Section III you will be helped to understand how and why differing approaches are used by professionals who work with young children. Three general perspectives on child development and early childhood education are presented and then extended through a discussion of four specific program models. There are, of course, many different ways of organizing time schedules, arranging and using classroom space, and establishing and maintaining ground rules for children's behavior. Consequently, the last three chapters of this section help you develop the knowledge and skills to establish and to maintain a productive classroom, to plan and manage lessons and activities, and to communicate effectively with children, parents, and co-workers.

Section IV will help you develop your teaching **resourcefulness**. You will learn how to set up activity centers and how to conduct the kinds of activities that help children learn. The need for a broad and varied teaching **repertoire**

that allows you to provide for quite diverse individual needs is constantly demonstrated and emphasized throughout the section.

The following procedures are recommended for maximizing the benefits you derive from the text:

1. Make arrangements to have experiences with young children in which you observe and interact with them. If you are currently enrolled in a college teacher-preparation program, such field experiences may be arranged for you. If not, you should make your own arrangements for contact with children who are three through seven years of age. The following are possible ways to obtain this kind of opportunity:

Volunteer your services to assist teachers in nursery school, day care, kindergarten, or primary grades. Make realistic commitments that you can dependably carry out

Arrange to baby-sit for children of varying ages.

Volunteer to assist the persons responsible for church school classes.

Volunteer to assist the librarians in the children's section of a public library.

2. Develop a portfolio of materials related to your professional growth. Such a portfolio could contain papers and writing for your early childhood education courses; collections of related news clippings, articles, and references; activity suggestions; directories of resources; and catalogs. Developing a useable system for collecting, storing, and retrieving reference materials will definitely help your professional growth. For suggestions in classifying these materials, refer to Appendix 1.

The process of becoming a competent teacher is continuous. This textbook and your current teacher-preparation program are merely the beginning. Nor will the process be completed when you have graduated and are employed as a teacher. As authors, our goal is to help you become a successful and effective teacher, but it is really *your* task.

# Contents

Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xv
Introduction	xvii

## **SECTION I BACKGROUND 2**

### **1 A Career in Early Childhood Education 5**

Overview	6
Decision Making	6
Some Background Information on Careers with Young Children	6
Pros and Cons of Becoming a Teacher of Young Children	13
Considering the Tasks of Teaching	20
Summary	23
Suggested Activities	24
Additional Readings	25

### **2 Historical Perspectives 26**

Overview	27
Changing Views of Childhood	27
The Roots of Modern Ideas of Childhood	28
Compensatory Education	35
Preschool for the Advantaged	39
Summary	40
Suggested Activities	41
Additional Readings	41

## **SECTION II SENSITIVITY TO CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT 44**

### **3 Physical and Motor Development 47**

Overview	48
Infants and Toddlers	48

Ages Three Through Seven	51
Summary	62
Suggested Activities	62
Additional Readings	63

#### **4    Observing Physical Characteristics and Motor Behavior      64**

Overview	65
Making Observations of Individual Children	65
Questions to Guide Observations	72
Sample Observations: Steven and Monica	77
From Observations to Planning	81
Summary	84
Suggested Activities	84
Additional Readings	85

<b>Mainstreaming</b>	<b>87</b>
Overview	87
The Rationale for Mainstreaming	87
Legislation: Public Law 94-142	89
Resources	90
Additional Readings	91

#### **5    Affective and Social Development      92**

Overview	93
Infants and Toddlers	93
Threes and Fours	96
Fives, Sixes, and Sevens	100
Summary	107
Suggested Activities	108
Additional Readings	108

#### **6    Observing Affective and Social Behaviors      109**

Overview	110
Questions to Guide Observations	110
Sample Observations: Steven and Monica	116
From Observations to Planning	120
Summary	123
Suggested Activities	123
Additional Readings	123

<b>Multicultural Education</b>	<b>125</b>
Overview	125
Self-Examination	125
Views on Multicultural Education	126
Two Complementary Concepts	127
Methods of Multicultural Education for Young Children	127
Understanding Cultural Characteristics	129
Developing Multicultural Perspectives	130
Oneness of the Human Condition	130
Resource Organizations	131
Additional Reading	132

## **7 Cognitive and Intellectual Development 133**

Overview	134
Infants and Toddlers	137
Threes and Fours	140
Fives, Sixes, and Sevens	147
Summary	156
Suggested Activities	156
Additional Readings	157

## **8 Observing Cognitive and Intellectual Behaviors 158**

Overview	159
Questions to Guide Observations	159
Sample Observations: Steven and Monica	165
From Observations to Planning	169
Summary	171
Suggested Activities	171
Additional Readings	172

## **SECTION III ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS 174**

## **9 Differing Orientations to Early Childhood Education 177**

Overview	178
Behaviorist Orientation	178
Maturationist Orientation	182
Constructivist Orientation	187
Summary	191

Suggested Activities	192
Additional Readings	192

## **10 Program Models                      194**

Overview	195
Cognitively-Oriented Curriculum	195
The Direct Instruction (Academic Preschool or DISTAR) Model	199
The Bank Street “Developmental Interaction” Approach	204
The Montessori Method	206
Summary	211
Suggested Activities	211
Additional Readings	212

## **11 Classroom Management and Discipline                      213**

Overview	214
The Physical Environment	214
Daily Routines	220
Guidance Strategies	222
Discipline	226
Summary	228
Suggested Activities	229
Additional Readings	229

## **12 Teaching Techniques and Strategies                      231**

Overview	232
Planning for Teaching	232
Alternative Strategies for Dialogue	240
Alternative Strategies for Lessons	245
Summary	251
Suggested Activities	252
Additional Readings	253

<b>Children and Technology</b>	<b>255</b>
Overview	255
Use of Computers by Children	255
Interactive Videodisc and Computer-Controlled Digital Visuals	257
Additional Reading	258

### **13 Communication 259**

Overview	260
Active Listening	260
Assertion	265
Problem Solving	266
Communication with Children	267
Communication with Parents	269
Communication with Co-workers	271
Summary	273
Suggested Activities	273
Additional Readings	274

## **SECTION IV TEACHING RESOURCEFULNESS 276**

### **14 Manipulative Materials 279**

Overview	280
Setups for Manipulative Materials	280
Relevance for Motor Development	286
Relevance for Affective and Social Development	287
Relevance for Cognitive Development	291
Further Extensions	300
Summary	301
Suggested Activities	301
Additional Readings	302

### **15 Art 303**

Overview	304
Setups for Art	305
Relevance for Motor Development	311
Relevance for Affective and Social Development	313
Relevance for Cognitive Development	318
Further Extensions	320
Summary	321
Suggested Activities	321
Additional Readings	322

### **16 Pretend 323**

Overview	342
Setups for Pretending	325

Relevance for Motor Development	327
Relevance for Affective Development	329
Relevance for Social Development	331
Relevance for Cognitive Development	333
Further Extensions	338
Summary	339
Suggested Activities	340
Additional Readings	341

**17 Music 342**

Overview	343
Setups for Music	343
Relevance for Motor Development	348
Relevance for Affective Development	350
Relevance for Social Development	354
Relevance for Cognitive Development	355
Further Extensions	358
Summary	358
Suggested Activities	359
Additional Readings	359

**18 Literature 361**

Overview	362
Setups for Literature	363
Relevance for Motor Development	367
Relevance for Affective Development	371
Relevance for Social Development	375
Relevance for Cognitive Development	377
Further Extensions	383
Summary	383
Suggested Activities	384
Additional Readings	384

**Reading and Writing 387**

Overview	387
Learning to Read: Opposing Perspectives	387
Studying Children's Concepts of Reading	388
Learning to Write	391
Additional Reading	396



**19 Sharing 397**

Overview	398
Setups for Sharing	399
Relevance for Motor Development	402
Relevance for Affective Development	404
Relevance for Social Development	405
Relevance for Cognitive Development	407
Further Extensions	413
Summary	414
Suggested Activities	414
Additional Readings	415

Epilogue	417
Appendix 1 Outline for a Portfolio	421
Appendix 2 Research Organizations	423
Appendix 3 Periodicals	425
Glossary	427
References	433
Index	439