

GUIDING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL _____ 2nd EDITION DEVELOPMENT

Foreword by Bernard Spodek



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GUIDING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Second Edition

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FOREWORD

Over the past quarter of a century, the field of early childhood education has vastly changed. Once few children were enrolled in programs before they entered the primary grades of the elementary school. Today almost all children are enrolled in kindergarten, primarily in public schools, and most children have had an early childhood experience before they enter kindergarten. Once parents enrolled their children in prekindergarten experiences in order that their children have playmates of their own age for some portion of the time. Today we recognize that there is much that a child needs to learn before entering the primary grades and that success in children's school careers can be significantly influenced by their experiences in the early years.

The fact that early childhood education is being taken seriously by the American community is good news for early childhood practitioners. Increased resources are being made available. Teachers of young children are being given somewhat higher status, no longer considered "glorified baby sitters." The "bad news" is that as status has increased for early childhood practitioners, so has accountability. Teachers of young children are expected to function in a more professional manner and to have

a greater level of professional knowledge. Teachers' classroom planning and classroom practices are expected to be effective. It isn't enough that early childhood programs don't harm children. Now we are being asked to demonstrate that our practices achieve educationally worthwhile outcomes. This means that the programs we provide must be challenging to young children at their particular level of development without being frustrating to them. It also means that the goals we help young children achieve in our programs are ones that are valued in our society.

Just as the availability of programs for young children and enrollments in these programs have changed dramatically in the last quarter of a century, so have program goals. A good example can be found in the changes that have taken place in the goals of Head Start during that time. In the early days of Head Start, the children enrolled were provided with comprehensive health, nutrition, and social service programs. They were also provided with an educational program component that was expected to improve the children's intelligence. Program outcomes were measured using IQ tests. Programs were considered effective if the IQ scores of the children involved increased.

In time, a number of problems were encountered with this established goal. Increases in IQ scores that were initially found in Head Start graduates were not sustained. In addition, it was noted that children's intelligence alone does not determine an individual's success in school—or in life after school, for that matter. As a result the goals of Head Start underwent considerable change. Social competence became the intended outcome for this program. This change did not result from the failure of Head Start to achieve its initial goal, but through an understanding of the importance of social competence, not only in getting along in society, but in learning to use the intelligence available to every individual.

Social competence includes social cognition and social skills. Social cognition consists of those understandings necessary to function in a social role. Knowledge of the larger society and its rules, roles and values are important as is knowledge of the smaller social groups in which the individual functions. For young children this means understanding the way the class functions and understanding the roles of different members in the school group—teacher as well as child. It also means understanding what it takes to function in a peer group. Social skills are those skills needed to function harmoniously within a group in such a way that allows one to achieve personal success as well as serve the needs of the group. For example, becoming a part of a group of playing children is a complex task which requires understanding how the groups function as well as the purposes of the group. It also requires skill to introduce oneself into the play without being rejected.

As more young children spend an increasingly large part of their early childhood years in early childhood programs, social competence has been seen as a more important outcome of early childhood education. There is evidence that those children who do not achieve social

competence in the early years are at risk in their social lives later in life.

There is no curriculum area in the early childhood program for children's social development as there is for the development of language and literacy. Rather, the concern for children's social development transcends the way teachers work with children in all areas of the curriculum. It is most important, however in the area of children's play.

Guiding Children's Social Development, second edition, has been designed as a text to help teachers of young children and those intending to be teachers of young children to understand the nature of social development in young children and how to guide that development in the early childhood classroom. The book contains a number of practical guidelines and strategies for addressing common social concerns. It addresses ways of helping children develop and sustain friendships and build positive relationships through nonverbal communication. It helps teachers in promoting children's self-awareness and self-esteem. It provides teachers with an understanding of the need to respond to children's emotions; as it also identifies appropriate ways to provide such responses. It offers strategies for fostering self-discipline in children and handling children's aggressive behavior. The original edition was a highly useful text. The new edition contains a number of resources that should make the book even more useful to its readers.

This book provides an excellent resource for early childhood practitioners as they guide the education of young children in their classes. It addresses an important area of the early childhood curriculum and does it well. It not only serves teachers well, it also serves the field of early childhood education well.

Bernard Spodek
November, 1992

PREFACE

Writing the second edition of a book is a lot like retelling a favorite story aloud. Knowing that some people have heard the tale before and that others are hearing it for the first time, the storyteller must strike a balance between maintaining the tradition of the story and modifying it to meet current listener needs. With this in mind, certain elements remain similar from one telling to the next—the setting, the characters, the sequence of events. Favorite segments are savored and lovingly presented in the same words to provide continuity across renditions. Other features of the account, however, change. With experience, the storyteller learns what parts to curtail and what parts to embellish; when to proceed slowly and when to accelerate the pace. Questions from listeners are anticipated and answers are woven into the narrative just as they are about to be asked. It is this same process that has characterized the reformulation of *Guiding Children's Social Development*.

Our philosophy remains the same. Our original purpose in writing a book was to do something to improve the quality of life for children and their families and to contribute to the professional development of practitioners in training. That continues to be our aim. We believe that helping professionals have a primary

role in providing emotional support and guidance to the youngsters with whom they work. This includes helping children develop positive feelings about themselves, increasing their ability to interact effectively with others, and teaching them socially acceptable means of behavior. We have also come to know that this type of learning is facilitated when children view the adult as a wellspring of comfort and encouragement as well as a source of behavioral guidance. How proficiently adults perform these roles is affected by the extent to which they understand child development, their ability to establish positive relationships with children, and their grasp of principles related to behavior management. Therefore, it is our premise that helping professionals must first learn about children's social development and then become adept in relationship-enhancement skills and behavior-management techniques.

Unfortunately, in the literature and in practice, a dichotomy often is assumed between relationship enhancement and behavior management. For example, approaches that focus on the former teach students how to demonstrate warmth and respect, acceptance and empathy, but leave them to their own devices in figuring out how to deal with typical childhood

behaviors such as spitting, hitting, teasing, or making friends. Conversely, approaches that focus on behavior control address the latter circumstances but often neglect to teach students how to build rapport with children, how to help children develop coping strategies, or how to assist them in better understanding themselves and others.

We have decided to tackle these issues by including research, information, and skills associated with both relationship enhancement and behavior management. We have pulled together a unique blend of organismic and mechanistic theory and practice that establishes common ground between the two while maintaining the integrity of each. In doing so, we demonstrate that there is a factual knowledge base that can be brought to bear on how aspiring professionals think about children's social development and how they respond to it.

Additionally, too often, we have encountered students and practitioners who treat their interactions with children as wholly intuitive. They rely on "gut-level" responses, adhering to no explicit or comprehensive principles. These adults frequently view child guidance as a series of tricks that they use indiscriminately to meet short-range objectives, such as getting a child to stop interrupting. They have no purposeful or integrated set of strategies that address long-range goals, such as teaching a child to delay gratification. Other adults have more knowledge about broad principles regarding relationship building and behavior management but have difficulty integrating those principles into a systematic, consistent plan of action. Most distressing to us are those adults whose lack of training leads them to conclude that the normal behaviors children exhibit as they engage in the socialization process somehow are abnormal or malicious. These people also fail to recognize the impact of their own behavior on their interactions with children. As a result, when children do not comply with their expectations, they

view condemnation, rather than teaching, as appropriate for the situation.

Guiding Children's Social Development has been written to address these shortcomings. It is our goal to eliminate much of the guesswork and frustration experienced by professionals in the field as well as to improve the conditions under which children are socialized in formal group settings. To accomplish this, we have provided a solid foundation of child-development information. In addition, we have shown how to translate that information into related skills and procedures that support children's social development.

New to This Edition

The second edition of *Guiding Children's Social Development: Classroom Practices* has been extensively updated. Based on feedback from our readers, we have also added several new segments to the book. Among these are effective praise and questioning techniques (Chapter 4), how to deal with violence in children's play (Chapter 6), the use of attribution as a guidance technique (Chapter 7), the impact of television on child development and behavior (Chapter 9), and how to work with HIV infected children and their parents as well as youngsters exposed to alcohol and cocaine use (Chapter 10). Chapter 12 has been completely reorganized to include supervision of the physical environment and techniques for managing learning centers in a preprimary or elementary classroom. Helping children develop conversation skills (Chapter 13), working with multi-problem families (Chapter 15) and considering child abuse within the broader framework of overall child maltreatment (Chapter 16) are additional changes we have made. All of these revisions are meant to address current issues in child development and early intervention. Their inclusion should better prepare students to face the realities of working with young children on a day to day basis. We have also added field assignments at the end of

each chapter to promote student involvement with the content and to increase their ability to transfer what they have learned to practice.

Presentation

Taken altogether, the chapters in this book comprise a thorough picture of children's social development and the classroom practices professionals use to enhance child development and learning. We have been careful to include traditional areas of study such as self-esteem, aggression, routines, rules, and consequences. We also have addressed more current topics of interest such as infant communication, stress, friendship, super hero play and prosocial behavior. Considered individually, each chapter offers an in-depth literature review in which findings from many fields have been integrated (psychology, physiology, education, medicine, sociology, home economics, personnel management, interior design). Thus, even within the confines of a single subject, there is breadth. The sequences of chapters also has been thoughtfully planned so that each serves as a foundation for the next—simple concepts and/or skills precede more complex ones; chapters that focus on relationship enhancement come before those that discuss behavior management.

Throughout the text, we have tried to establish a lucid, straightforward style, which we hope makes the book easy to read and interesting. Although many research findings have been cited, we have purposely used parenthetical notation rather than constantly referring to the researchers by name. We want students to remember the *concepts* those findings represent rather than to simply memorize names and dates. In addition, we have made liberal use of real-life examples to illustrate concepts and related skills. This is to assist students in making the connection between what they read and "flesh-and-blood" children. Furthermore, we have described many different settings in which adults find themselves working with children

so that regardless of their professional intents, students can relate to what we have written. Another reason for multiple-setting scenarios is to demonstrate that the content is not situation bound and that the knowledge and skills can be generalized from one setting to another.

Our scope of study encompasses the social development of children from birth to twelve years of age. We have targeted this period of childhood because it is during the formative years that the foundation for all socialization takes place. Furthermore, the skills taught have been specially designed to take into account the cognitive structures and social abilities particular to children of this age.

Because children live and develop within the context of a family, a community, a nation, and a world, they are constantly influenced by, and in turn affect, the people and events around them. Thus, our perspective is an ecological one in which children are viewed as dynamic, ever-changing components in an equally dynamic, ever-changing milieu. This ecological perspective is incorporated into each chapter in the literature review and in many of the examples provided. Additionally, in most chapters, at least one and sometimes more of the discussion questions raise these issues for students to think about.

It has been our experience that students learn professional behavior best when they are given clear, succinct directions for how to carry out a procedure. Defining a procedure, offering examples, and giving a rationale for its use are necessary, but not sufficient. Thus, our approach to skill training is to point out to the student research-based strategies related to chapter content. We then break those strategies down into a series of discrete, observable skills that students can implement. We have been direct, rather than circumspect, in articulating the specific steps involved. This forthrightness should not be taken to imply that our directions are immutable or that there is no room for students to use the skills creatively. Rather, we

anticipate that students will internalize and modify skills according to their own needs, personality, interaction style, and circumstance once they have learned them. In addition, we recognize that an important component of using skills correctly is determining which alternatives from the entire available array are best suited for a given situation. Hence, knowing when to use a particular skill and when to refrain from using it is as important as knowing how to use it. For this reason, we discuss these issues throughout each chapter, both in the body of the text and in the pitfalls section at the end. We also have incorporated specific guidelines for how the skills can be adapted for use with youngsters of varying ages and differing cultural backgrounds. Finally, Chapter 16, Making Judgments, has been included to further help students make these decisions.

Supplementary Materials

In addition to the textbook, we have also designed an instructor's manual for the teacher.

Learning aids. This book incorporates a number of features aimed at enhancing student learning:

Each chapter is introduced by a statement of objectives, which tells students what they should know on completion of that segment of the book. This alerts them to the major foci of that chapter.

All chapters open with a discussion of theory and research related to a particular social-development topic. Implications of the research for both children and adults also are described.

A major portion of each chapter is devoted to presenting the professional skills relevant to the topic under discussion. Each skill is broken down into a series of observable behaviors that students can learn and instructors can evaluate directly. This section also makes extensive use of examples to further illustrate the skills under consideration.

Near the end of each chapter is a description of pitfalls or common mistakes students make when first learning to use the skills. Suggestions for how to avoid these difficulties are provided.

All chapters include a summary that gives a brief overview of the material presented. This is a useful synopsis for student review of important concepts.

An added feature of each chapter is a listing of topics for discussion. These are thought-provoking questions aimed at helping students synthesize and apply, through conversations with classmates, what they have read.

Instructor's manual. A comprehensive instructor's manual further supplements the textbook. In it, we describe how to organize a course using the textbook; how to search out, select, and maintain appropriate field placements for students; how to model skills for students to imitate; and how to provide feedback to students assigned to field placements. In addition, we have included a series of rehearsal exercises, which are role-play activities meant to be carried out in class. They are aimed at acquainting students with how to use particular skills prior to implementing them with children and at clarifying basic concepts as they emerge during discussion or interaction. An extensive test bank also has been developed as part of the instructor's manual. Multiple-choice, true-false, short-answer, and essay questions are presented on a chapter-by-chapter basis. Finally, the instructor's manual contains a criterion-referenced observational tool, the PSI (professional skills inventory). This is a unique feature of our instructional package. It can be used by instructors and/or practitioners to evaluate the degree to which students demonstrate the skills taught.

Each chapter concludes with a suggested list of field assignments students may use to practice and perfect the skills described. These

assignments may be carried out independently or under the direction of the instructor.

To the Student

This book will give you a foundation of knowledge and skills necessary for guiding children's social development in professional practice. We hope it will contribute to your enthusiasm about the field and to your confidence in working with young children and their families. Although what you read here will not encompass everything you will need to know, it will serve as a secure base from which you can begin to develop your own professional style.

You will have the advantage of learning, in one course, a myriad of information and strategies that otherwise might take many years to discover. Through examples, you will be able to accumulate a background of experience that you may not yet have had a chance to develop or learn by other means. Finally, you will be reading a book authored by people with extensive practical experience in working with children, engaging in research, and teaching this content to learners much like yourselves. As a result, we are well aware of the issues related to children's social development that are important to students, and we have focused on those. We also have anticipated some of the questions you might ask and some of the difficulties you might encounter in working with this material. Consequently, we have made a conscious effort to discuss these in relevant places throughout the book.

Hints for Using the Materials

1. Read each chapter of the textbook carefully. Plan to read them more than once. Use the first reading to gain a broad grasp of the subject matter; then, read a second time, paying particular attention to the normative sequence of development presented. Identify major concepts regarding adult behavior, and focus on the actual procedures related to each skill. Use subsequent readings to recall the material in more detail.
2. Jot notes in the margin and underline points you wish to remember.
3. Go beyond simply memorizing terminology. Concentrate on how you might recognize the concepts you are studying in real children's behavior and how you might apply this knowledge in your interactions with children. Not only will this expand your understanding of the material, but both levels of information are likely to appear on quizzes and exams.
4. Ask questions. Share with classmates and the instructor your experiences in using the material. Participate fully in class discussions and role-play exercises.
5. Try out what you are learning with children. If you are in a field placement, are volunteering, or are employed in a program, take full advantage of that opportunity. Do not hesitate to practice your skills simply because they are new to you and you are not sure how well you will perform them. Persist in spite of your awkwardness or mistakes, and make note of what you might do to improve. Focus on your successes and your increasing skill, not just on things that don't go perfectly. Allow yourself to enjoy the children even as you are learning from them.

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Finally, over the years, we have worked with many students whose enthusiasm and excitement have invigorated us. Simultaneously, we have been privileged to know hundreds of children during their formative years. From them we have gained insight and the motivation to pursue this project. To them this book is dedicated.

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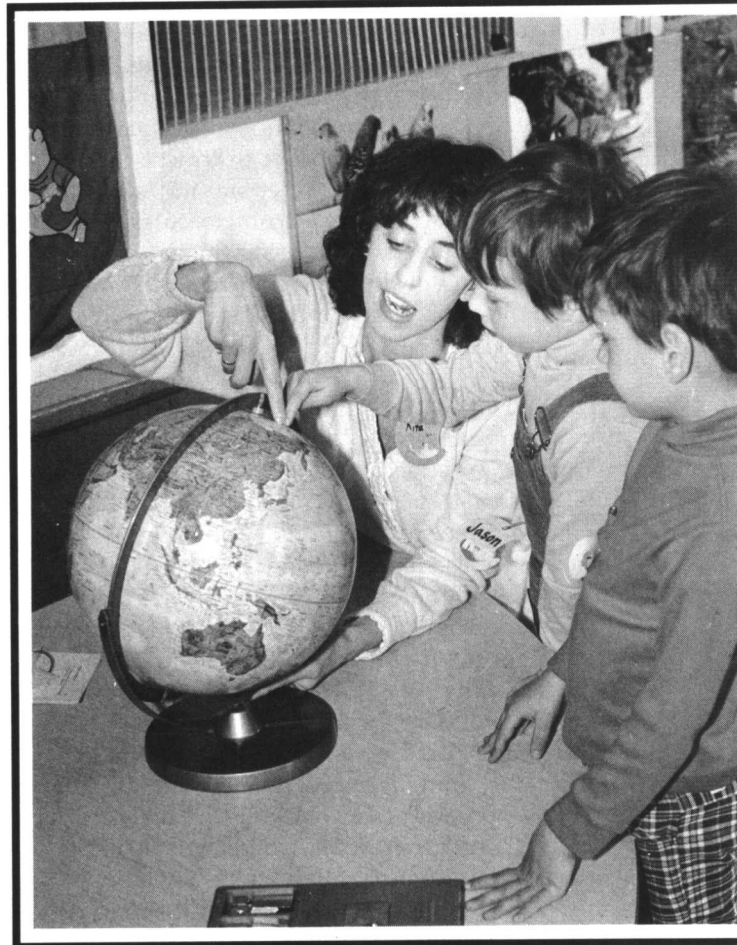
CHAPTER 1

Professional Involvement with Young Children

OBJECTIVES:

On completion of this chapter, you will be able to describe:

1. Factors related to social competence.
2. Basic principles of human development.
3. How children learn.
4. An ecological view of children and the value of maintaining such a view.
5. Why families are important and how they function.
6. How formal group settings influence children's development.
7. What it means to be a helping professional.
8. The overall structure and format of this book.



Courtesy of David Kostelnik

Humans are social beings. From the moment we are born, we begin a lifetime of interdependence. Social interactions fulfill our intrinsic need for companionship, stimulation, feedback, and a sense of belonging. So crucial is this aspect of our lives that infants who receive adequate physical care, but who are deprived of social relationships, fail to thrive and sometimes even die (Spitz, 1949; Gardner, 1972). In fact, in most cultures, isolation from others is considered the severest form of punishment, short of death.

It is through social exchanges that we develop a sense of self, acquire knowledge and skills regarding human relationships, learn the rules and values of the society in which we live, as well as influence the people and settings around us. Much of this learning occurs during childhood. Indeed, it is during the early years that children develop the social foundation on which they will build for the rest of their lives.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

To operate effectively in the social world children must learn to recognize, interpret, and respond to social situations (Hendrick, 1992). They must also make judgements about how to reconcile differences between their own needs and interests and the demands and expectations of the social environments in which they live (Oppenheimer, 1989). How well they do this is a measure of their social competence. Thus Art, who notices that Gary is unhappy and attempts to comfort him, is more socially adept than Ralph, who walks by oblivious to his peer's distress. Moreover, Dinah, who habitually blurts out whatever is on her mind the instant it occurs to her, is less socially mature than if she were to wait without interrupting. Similarly, when Chip uses verbal reasoning to convince his friends to try his idea to solve a group problem, he is demonstrating more social competence than classmates who rely on physical force to make their point or who allow their ideas to be

completely ignored. There is strong evidence that in this society, children are viewed as more socially competent when they are responsible rather than irresponsible; independent versus suggestible; friendly, not hostile; cooperative instead of resistive; purposive rather than aimless; self-controlled, not impulsive; able both to give and receive emotional support (Baumrind, 1970; Bloom, Hastings, and Madaus, 1971). In addition to the global traits cited above, the behaviors associated with social competence include: social awareness, information processing, communication and problem solving abilities, enactment skills and self-monitoring (Dodge, 1985).

Social competence is acquired over time and is influenced by developmental as well as experiential factors. As children mature, developmental changes occur in the structure of their thinking that increase their effective social capacity. Thus, social development becomes more complex and sophisticated as children's linguistic, memory, cognitive, and physical abilities expand. This progression is illustrated by the role that development plays in the strategies children use in eliciting caregiving behaviors in the first few years of life (Bowlby, 1969). Initially, it is the infant's reflexes that contribute most to closeness with the caregiver—grasping, sucking, and rooting are all automatic, unconscious actions that draw the adult near. Gradually, as infants' cognitive structures change and the use of their bodies comes more into conscious control, they have a greater range of eliciting behaviors at their disposal. Soon, they vocalize, smile, and reach as ways of gaining adult attention and affection. Once babies become mobile, their expanded physical development allows them to actively seek out their caregivers, crawling after them, clinging to them, and scrambling into their laps. Older children, whose language and reasoning are more developed, quickly take advantage of such strategies as asking for a story to be read, to have one more drink of water, or to participate in a game as ways to be close to adults.