

Joseph T. Lawton

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

*INTRODUCTION
TO CHILD CARE
AND EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION*



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*INTRODUCTION
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Preface

This book is intended for courses introducing students to the study of child care and early childhood education. Students taking a course in child development and early childhood care and education, to fulfill a general requirement, as an elective or major, will find it both interesting and informative. Because it covers various aspects of the care and education of young children, it will be of interest to administrators, social workers involved with young children and their families, and, of course, parents.

The book is in four parts. Part I begins with a chapter on the historical development of early childhood programs. Chapter 2 follows with a discussion of the importance of early childhood care and education. Chapter 3 provides a description of different types of early childhood programs. Chapter 4 introduces the reader to the politics of early childhood care and education from the mid-1800s to the present time.

In Part II you will read about different theories of child development and learning and how they have been applied to the organization of early childhood programs. Also included in Part II are chapters on the organization of early childhood programs, curriculum development, and attending to the care and education of children with special needs.

In Chapter 5 the discussion of several theories of development and learning and their relevance to the organization of early childhood programs, is enhanced by examples from actual early child care programs. These programs are discussed in Chapter 6, and other related programs are cited in Chapters 7–10. This continuity of examples taken from the same early childhood programs is important to show the relationship between theory and practice and to show that there are a variety of approaches to the organization of early childhood programs.

Part III deals with three very important concerns of parents and teachers: the value of involving parents in early childhood programs and the important role of parents as educators; the special consideration that must be given to ensuring the health and physical well-being of young children through a full understanding of good nutrition and health care; and the importance of discipline, or, to describe it with a broader term, the management of children's behavior.

Administrative skills are essential to the maintenance of a high quality program. Part IV covers the three most important roles of the administrator or director of an early childhood program: the need to be aware of the regulations that govern early childhood programs; concerns for the staffing and supervision of a program; and the crucial attention that must be given to the financing of a program.

Here are a few suggestions that may be useful when reading each chapter. Since each chapter ends with a detailed summary of the major ideas and concepts within the chapter, it is best to *read the summary first*, and use it as your guide. This will help you to recognize the main ideas and concepts as they appear. After reading each chapter, reread the summary to review the facts once again.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people who have contributed directly and indirectly to the writing of this book. I should mention first that much of my thinking about the care and education of young children stems from the many years I was a teacher, from interesting, stimulating, and informative experiences with children and fellow teachers. Many of my university colleagues, and professionals in the field of child care and early childhood education have, through discussion, example, and shared working relationships enriched my understanding of how young children develop and learn. I must also thank my own family. Sharing the care of our children with my wife has been a wonderful, enjoyable, and valuable learning experience.

I would like to thank the reviewers, Beverly Briggs, Kansas State University, Susan Martin, University of Arkansas, Deborah Stone, University of New Hampshire, Carol Vukelich, University of Delaware, who, in a very constructive and thorough-going way, offered many useful comments and suggestions. The final form of this book is due, in no small measure, to their help and advice. I owe a special thanks to my editor, Mylan Jaixon, recently at Little, Brown, who encouraged me to write this book. He was enthusiastic about the early conceptions of the book, gave much encouragement as I settled into the writing, and provided useful advice and continuing support as the book took shape. My thanks go also to Yvonne Mottershead, Billie Ingram, Rachel Hockett, Carolyn Woznick, and Marion Forbes who, in different ways, attended to the details of production, and to my many questions and concerns. Thanks are also due to Christopher Jennison who took over the role of editor from Mylan Jaixon and who directed the final production of the book and supporting materials.

I appreciate the welcome extended me by a number of early childhood program directors who allowed me to observe and take photographs of their programs: Jacky Leckwee, the University of Wisconsin Preschool Laboratory; Jim Morin, Bernie's Place; Joy Redman, Woodland Montessori; and, Carol Woltman, Meeting House. Many of the photographs I took serve to illustrate chapters in the book. Dr. Gary Moore, Director, Center for Architecture and Consumer Sciences School of Architecture & Urban Planning, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, kindly allowed me to use the floor plans of *Open*, *Modified-open*, and *Closed* types of early childhood program classrooms that appear in Chapter 9.

Special thanks must go to Jill Burk who researched materials for Chapters 2, 3, and 15, Dr. Mari Akre who, based on her experience in the nursing profession and in the field of child and family studies, brought a special perspective to the drafting of materials used in Chapter 13, and Walter (Chip) Donohue, an experienced administrator of early childhood programs and an active lobbyist for the support of early childhood programs at the state level, who researched and drafted materials used in Chapters 4, 16, and 17.

To Marjorie Pfiefer I extend my deepest appreciation for the efficient and prompt typing of the various drafts of each chapter. She certainly helped in keeping the writing moving along.

Finally, I want to thank my wife and children for their interest and encouragement that I found so sustaining during the time I worked on this book.

Joseph T. Lawton
April 1987

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